THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE

THE

WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY OF TRUE NARRATIVE

ADVENTURE
TRAVEL
CUSTOMS
AND
SPORT

"TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION"

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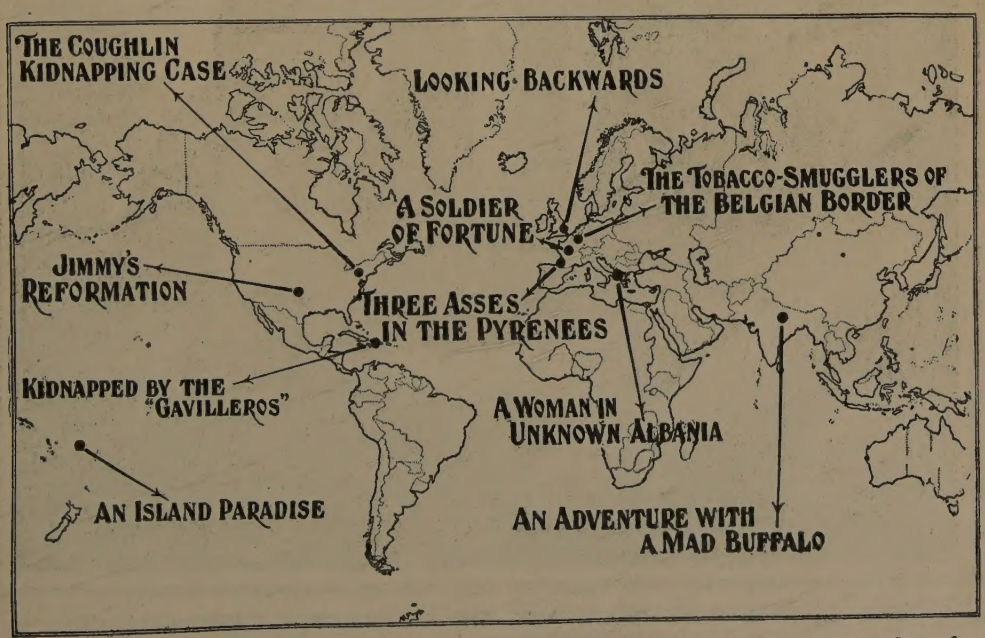
OUR 25TH BIRTHDAY.

WE have tried to give you a specially-good number this month in honour of the occasion. Don't miss "The Coughlin Case," a really remarkable narrative, or the exciting continuation of "A Soldier of Fortune." Our older readers will be interested in "Looking Backwards," which reviews the history of THE WIDE WORLD, while "The Tobacco Smugglers of the Belgium Border" will cause people who thought that smuggling on the big scale was dead to open their eyes in astonishment

Then up spake brave Horatius: "Take care you're not too late!
For every man who reads WIDE WORLD there lurks an awful fate.
Unless your copy's ordered, you're facing fearful odds,
You'll miss the fam'd 'MAN AND HIS NEEDS,' that feature from the gods."

The Editor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A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
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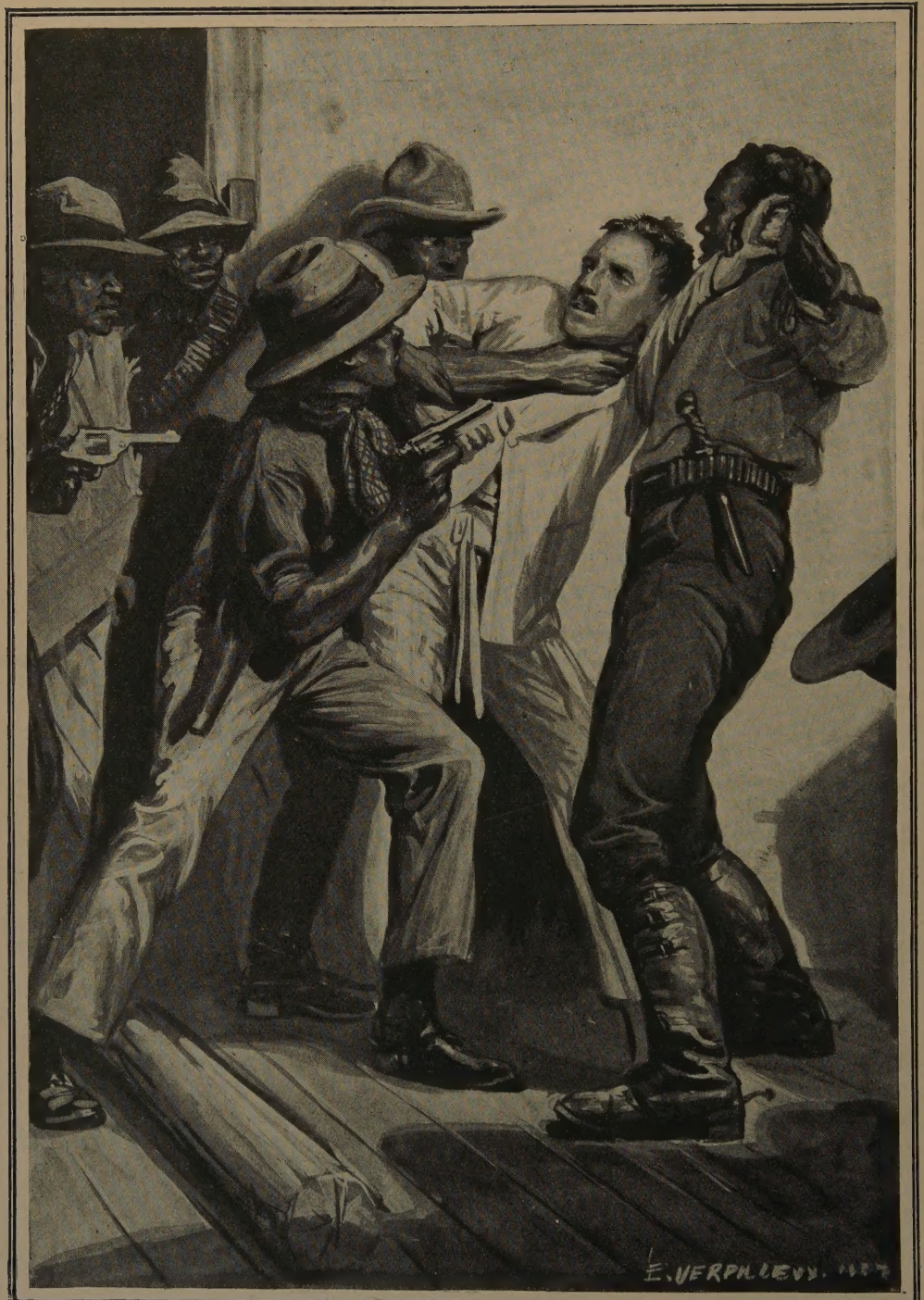
THREE ASSES IN THE PYRENEES
KIDNAPPED BY THE "GAVILLEROS"
A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA
AN ISLAND PARADISE
AN ADVENTURE WITH A MAD BUFFALO

The remarkable contents-map of "The Wide World Magazine," showing the locality of every article and story in this splendid number.



"THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN, AND SIX *GAVILLEROS* CAME CHARGING HEADLONG INTO THE ROOM."

(SEE PAGE 6.)

KIDNAPPED BY THE "GAVILLEROS"

TOLD BY THOS. X—
AND SET DOWN BY

William Wardale

ILLUSTRATED BY
E. VERPILLEUX

The turbulent West Indian island of Santo Domingo, as some of our readers may be aware, has been occupied by the United States with the idea of protecting foreign interests and restoring something like stability to the government. Certain sections of the Dominicans greatly resent this infringement of their independence, and all sorts of trouble have occurred, particularly in the interior, where rebellion, brigandage, and general insecurity are the order of the day. This story sets forth the remarkable experience that befell the British administrator of a large sugar estate who was kidnapped and held for ransom by a band of brigands under a self-styled "General." "At the narrator's request," says Mr. Wardale, "I have suppressed his name, but the narrative is absolutely authentic."

WITH so much unsettlement among the peoples of the various countries since the Great War, little publicity has been given to the grievances of the natives of the West Indian Republic of Santo Domingo, who object to the encroachment of American enterprise and particularly the American occupation.

Much money has been invested by American firms in building up the sugar plantations and factories on the island, an investment which is paying good dividends.

This has aroused the jealousy and greed of the less enterprising and more ignorant Dominicans, who are endeavouring by various ill-advised methods to drive all foreigners out of the island. The country is seething with insurrection, banditry, arson, murder and robbery, perpetrated by various bands of outlaws.

In response to numerous appeals the United States sent a few marines to the Island to protect American lives and property, but they can do little against the elusive brigands of the interior.

These outlaws are known as "*gavilleros*," and are organized in bands composed of fifty or sixty men, each under a leader whom they call "General." While all of them operate under a common impulse, each band has its own methods of "raising the wind." The following story, told by an English resident, whom I will call Mr. X——, is typical of the dangers that confront the foreigner in Santo Domingo.

At the time of my adventure I was the administrator of the largest sugar plantation in the Republic, a post I had held since 1895. During the early part of September, 1921, I took my wife and son for a short vacation, returning late in the afternoon of the twenty-sixth and proceeding at once to our private residence. After supper I drove my car over to the factory on the plantation, being anxious to straighten out some business which had been left in abeyance during my absence.

Under the door of my private office, which had been kept locked during my absence, I found a letter that had apparently been delivered by hand, as it bore no stamp or post-mark. It was addressed to myself and dated September 24th. Written in excellent Spanish, it stated: "A messenger

will call upon you on September 26th for five thousand dollars, an appropriation earnestly desired for the 'Cause,'" and was signed "General Ramon Nateras," the signature having been impressed with a rubber stamp.

This curt request for money bore a very sinister aspect, for I was well acquainted with the *modus operandi* of these lawless Dominicans.

Evidently I had been chosen as the next victim of their nefarious demands; and even now Nemesis would be on my trail for not having obeyed the call, regardless of the fact that I had not received the letter until the ultimatum had all but expired. Even if I had felt disposed to buy my safety, however, I could not have obtained the ready cash at such short notice, and so I made up my mind to see the matter through.

With all thoughts of work temporarily banished from my mind, I locked up the office and drove home again, keeping a sharp look-out for any suspicious characters. Had I been walking I should probably have been tapped on the shoulder by some lurking "messenger" and asked for my reply to the letter, but as it was nobody accosted me.

Not wishing to alarm my wife, I refrained from mentioning the matter to her, but nevertheless I made sure before retiring for the night that all the shutters and doors of our house were securely fastened, and that my Colt automatic pistol was loaded and in its place.

The fact that our house was situated two miles out of the town and that the U.S. marines there had been taken away for duty elsewhere, caused me to spend a somewhat restless night, and I felt distinctly relieved when daylight dawned without anything unusual having happened.

The next day, Tuesday, September 27th, I was much occupied with work at the office, which diverted my thoughts from the amiable letter of "General Ramon Nateras."

That evening my son departed on a visit to some friends for a few days, which left me with only my wife and her maid in the house. Before retiring for the night I again took the precaution of seeing that all the outer doors and shutters were securely fastened. I also paid a visit to my old watchman, "Ramon," whose duty it was to guard the grounds during the night.

I had fallen into a sound sleep when, about 11.35, I was suddenly awakened by my wife shaking me.

"Wake up, Tom," she cried. "There is somebody knocking on the front shutters."

I hurriedly rolled out and sat on the edge of the bed listening. I heard the knocking on the shutters and someone calling, "Señor! Señor!"

"Hello! What do you want?" I shouted.

"Open the door and let me in," came the answer.

"I certainly will not—until I know who you are and what you want," I retorted.

There was silence for a moment and then some more impatient knocking. Another voice shouted: "If you don't open the door at once we will set fire to your house!"

I could hear several men talking excitedly, and presently one, who appeared to be in authority, told someone else to "bring the bottles." I knew what this meant; these *gavilleros* carry bottles of kerosene when they are bent upon incendiarism, and much damage is done to property and sugar-crops in order to intimidate their victims into submitting to their demands.

I at once ran to a small aperture in one of the heavy Venetian shutters and peered out. I could dimly discern about fourteen or fifteen saddled horses out on the front driveway, and therefore presumed there were that number of men around the house.

Running back into the bedroom I told my wife, who had now been joined by the maid, that they had better lock themselves in the cellar.

I then rushed to the telephone to call up "Central" and so raise an alarm. I got no response to my frantic ringing, however, and quickly realized that the wires had been cut, thus destroying my only means of communication.

All this time the *gavilleros* had been hammering on the door and shutters, but fortunately these resisted their efforts, owing to the fact that I had had strong steel cross-bars placed on the insides for just such an emergency as this.

I was not afraid of their shooting, as both the door and shutters had been made bullet-proof some years before. Many houses in Santo Domingo are protected in this manner as a precaution against stray bullets, which are very much in evidence during the all-too-frequent skirmishes between the marines and the *gavilleros*.

Though I was tolerably safe against rifle-fire, I was well aware that the house was not fireproof, and this fact caused me some alarm, as I knew the rascals would soon realize the futility of trying to force the door and shutters and would set fire to the place in order to smoke me out.

After cogitating for some minutes, amid the din and clatter, wondering what would happen next, I suddenly remembered my Colt automatic "·45" and ran back into my bedroom for it. But it had disappeared! Thinking my wife had taken it with her into the cellar, I ran there quickly—only to find the place empty! I hunted and called her and the maid all over the house, but without any response; they had completely vanished!

If it had not been for the incessant hammering on the front door, I should have imagined I was having a nightmare; the

"They bundled me out pell-mell and, with revolvers pointing at my head, made me mount a saddled horse."

disappearance of the two women, in addition to the pistol, seemed absolutely uncanny.

Completely bewildered, I went through to the back part of the house, feeling very much like a rat in a trap. Here I noticed that the steel bars on the back door were out of position.

Instantly I realized that, while I was engaging the *gavilleros* at the front part of the house, my wife and the maid had taken their chance and made their escape by way of the back door.

Greatly relieved at this discovery, I was about to replace the steel cross-bars when there came a mighty crash, the door swung open, and a large log of wood, accompanied by six *gavilleros*, came charging headlong into the room.

In less time than it takes to tell, the intruders had recovered from their surprise, scrambled up, and pounced upon me like so many tigers. Having cautioned me not to offer any resistance under pain of death, they bundled me out pell-mell and, with revolvers pointing at my head, made me mount a saddled horse.

Here was I, on a damp foggy night, clad only in the very thinnest of pyjamas and a pair of bedroom slippers, mounted upon the most awkward horse it has ever been my misfortune to ride, with a saddle much too small—I weigh nearly two hundred pounds—and stirrups much too long, being galloped away through the night to a destination and fate unknown!

What were they going to do with me? Where were they taking me? These and a host of other thoughts passed through my mind.

Presently we slowed down to a walk and entered a sugar plantation, and I feared the worst!

A man murdered and left amongst the canes, which were some eight to ten feet in height, might not be found for months, as the plantation extended for miles.

Now that we were at a walking pace I took the opportunity of asking one of my captors what they were going to do with me. "The General wants to see you," he growled. "He is at the camp."

My spirits rose again and I started to think quickly. I knew that within half a mile we should come to the river, and as it was too deep to ford we should be compelled to swim across. This, then, would be my opportunity to escape!

Once half-way across, I decided, I would slip off the horse and swim down stream. I am an expert swimmer, so by kicking off my slippers, being clad only in pyjamas, I should be fully prepared to swim or float down the river nearer to the town.

My captors would be handicapped in a pursuit by their equipment of riding boots and spurs, clothes and rifles, and it was too dark for them to see me from the banks.

After leaving the sugar canes we again broke into a slow, jogging canter, but just before reaching the river we turned to the left, keeping parallel to the stream.

At this change of direction my spirits sank again. The torture of the small saddle, intensified by the awkward motion, caused me terrible pains, and involuntarily I pulled on the reins to steady my horse.

This did not please the *gavilleros*, for every time I eased my mount one or the other of them would at once hit the animal with the flat of his *machete* (sword) and threaten to serve me the same. Finally I begged for time to adjust my stirrups, at the same time pulling the reins again to stop the horse.

This exasperated the brutal ruffians still more, and one struck me a smart blow across the shoulders with his *machete*, exclaiming: "Shut your mouth, you devil, or I'll kill you!"

Even the sting of the flat of the *machete* was less severe than the saddle torture, and I was about to roll off the saddle to the ground and defy them to do their worst when we came to a halt and dismounted near the river bank.

Daylight was just dawning and I could discern two *yolas* (row-boats) fastened to the bank. Two men entered each *yola*, one rowing, the other leading his swimming horse, having previously placed his saddle and equipment in the *yola*.

When the *yolas* returned, I was ordered into one and, together with my saddle, was rowed across.

As the river was only seventy or eighty yards wide at this point, with daylight sufficient to see clearly across to the other side, all thought of escape by swimming was hopeless.

While waiting for the remainder to cross, I busied myself in shortening my stirrup leathers.

The sun was well up by the time the remainder of the men and horses were over. I did not recognize this part of the country, there being no signs of habitation, and the surroundings appeared to be dense jungle.

Upon the arrival of the last man and horse, the order to "mount and follow" was given by a fellow whom I now recognized as their *jefe* (captain), who led the way into the dark and almost impenetrable jungle.

So dark was it that candles had to be lit in some places to enable those in the lead to see to cut a trail through the dense undergrowth. Very often we were forced to dismount and lead our horses, owing to the extreme roughness of the ground.

My slippers, now full of mud, were difficult to keep on; my ankles and legs were torn and bleeding, and I was for ever slipping or tripping over obstacles.

Presently, seizing a piece of *bejuca* (bush creeper) I sat down and attempted to tie

my slippers on more securely. I was again struck with a *machete* and kicked by one of my escort, who shouted, "Curse you! Get on, you worthless white!"

I could stand it no longer, for I was almost exhausted. Shouting out my protests, and calling for their *jefe*, I stubbornly refused to move.

The *jefe*, hearing the shouting, came back to ascertain the cause. I explained my trouble and the brutal attack on me by the *gavillero*. The captain reprimanded him, threatening him with instant death if he assaulted me again. They gave me sufficient time to secure my slippers, and then we again moved forward through the jungle.

After about two hours of this arduous travel we arrived at a field of Indian corn, where we left our horses and proceeded on foot.

From here we commenced a steep climb up a hill, passing armed *gavilleros* who appeared to be on outpost duty.

One hour of this climbing brought us to the camp. Here fifty or sixty armed outlaws were sitting around a number of palm-leaf huts which were camouflaged with green boughs.

Into one of these huts I was thrust and two armed guards were stationed at the entrance to prevent my escape. This precaution, at the moment, was absolutely unnecessary, for my exhaustion was complete. Having asked for and obtained a drink of water, I lay down on a dried grass litter to stretch my aching limbs.

It was not long, however, before one of the guards entered, shook me roughly, and told me to "get up and come to the General."

Inwardly wishing him and the "General" in an even hotter place than Santo Domingo, but realizing my helplessness and the futility of refusing, I staggered rather than walked after my escort.

A hundred yards or so away were a group of *gavilleros* congregated around a Santo Domingo flag on a ten-foot pole stuck in the ground.

As my escort approached with me the crowd opened up in horseshoe fashion. Through the opening thus formed we passed and came to a halt immediately in front of a man standing with his back to the flag-pole.

My escort then took a pace forward and, with uplifted right hand and left knee slightly bent, saluted, and introduced me to the "General" as "Administrator of Z——."

The "General" was a formidable-looking personage, being armed to the very teeth like the pirates of old. With a .45-calibre revolver on each hip, a small one in his belt behind, and a big dagger, he looked like a veritable walking arsenal.

He was evidently possessed of a very fiery temper. One minute he would be hospitality itself; the next, seemingly without the slightest provocation, would see him raging, full of brutality and mouthing oaths. This latter mood, I discovered, was always preceded by the action of drawing one of his guns, with which he gesticulated wildly until his anger abated.

Immediately after my formal introduction I followed my escort's example, saluted, and said: "General, I am your prisoner and at your disposal. I am in ignorance whether it is Don Ramon Nateras that I have the pleasure of addressing, but please tell me why I have been brought here and subjected to such indignities by your men?"

He replied, in a most savage tone: "This is no time to ask questions! I am just 'General' to you, and you are here to do my bidding. *Carrajo!* 'Indignities,' you say?"

With that he drew one of his guns, which he waved about while he shouted oaths, working himself into a semi-insane passion. "They are nothing to what you will get before you are through!" he went on. "*Carrajo!* You have taken no notice of the two or three letters sent you, and have neglected to provide the five thousand dollars asked for by the *Junta* of our cause. We are not bandits, but are forming an army to fight for our liberty and that flag"—pointing his gun to the Santo Domingo flag—"which you Americans want to take away from us. *Carrajo!* Every one of you will be driven out of the Republic!"

"Pardon me, General," I replied. "In the first place I am not an American, but an Englishman and a British subject. I have been away from the plantation for several weeks and did not return until late on September 26th, when I found your letter requesting the five thousand dollars. Your emissary did not call on me, so I have not had an opportunity of communicating with you. Neither have I received the other two or three letters you mention."

My reply visibly affected him, for obviously his subordinates had been lying to him. Turning about as though searching for someone to question, and failing to see him in the crowd, the "General" again turned toward me and exclaimed impatiently: "Your excuses mean nothing to me. Our requests for money are not to be treated lightly by you rich men, who should be helping the country, so you will now pay ten thousand dollars instead of five thousand, and remain here until it is paid."

One of the men standing near him, evidently a senior officer, suggested: "Why not make it fifty thousand? The firm, who value his services highly, would gladly pay that amount for his return."

"Gentlemen," I retorted, "you can take it from me that, so far as my life is concerned, I do not believe the firm would pay even five thousand dollars. I am nothing to them personally, and if I die they could easily find

a dozen or more men just as efficient as myself to fill the position. I, myself, am poor and can't pay anything. The greater the amount you demand the less your chance of getting anything at all, so be reasonable in your demands."

The "General," who, I could see, was thinking deeply, had now quieted down. His spasm of fury having abated, he tucked his gun away and said, quietly: "Well, we'll talk this over after you have eaten. Take him over to my quarters."

I was escorted to a palm-leaf shack about eight feet square, with a lean-to on one side. In the shack were the "General's" cot and belongings, and in the lean-to were two hammocks, one of which was assigned to me.

While waiting I looked around and came to the conclusion, from various signs, that the camp was about two weeks old. It was situated in an excellent defensive position, and so well camouflaged as to be unobservable either from above or below. These people are wonderfully ingenious, and though illiterate from a scholastic point of view, are remarkably well educated in other directions.

What surprised me most was the presence of two good-looking young women who were busily engaged around a near-by hut—apparently the kitchen—where they were preparing the next meal, the savoury odours of which excited my appetite, for I had not eaten since early the previous evening, and it was now getting on for noon.

Presently one of the girls came into the hut and began to prepare the rough bench for the meal. While my guards were sitting outside, lazily talking, I ventured to ask her what she was doing there among such a gang of ruffians.

"I was abducted by these bandits six months ago," she told me sadly. "They murdered my husband and brought me to the 'General.' Oh, how I hate him! But it is impossible for me to escape; the camp is always closely guarded, and pickets are stationed on every possible trail both day and night. The other girl is in the same position as myself."

She asked me to help them to escape when I got free, and I promised to do anything I could; but what that would be I had not the vaguest idea at the time.

When everything was in readiness for the meal, the "General," accompanied by four senior officers, came in and sat down. The food, of which there was plenty, consisted of roasted chicken, scrambled eggs, plantains, dried pork, and coffee.

The "General" watched me eat ravenously, and he actually apologized for the plain food. Finally, going to one of his kit-bags, he produced several pairs of blue dungaree trousers, similar to those worn by all the *gavilleros*. The largest pair he handed to me. I put them on at once, and although they lacked several inches round the waist I was glad to have them over my thin pyjamas. A piece of *bejuca* vine served as a belt. The "General" then asked me what size shoes I wore, promising to obtain a pair for me later.

So affable was he that I forgot for the moment that I was a hostage, but unfortunately, his Jekyll and Hyde temperament soon brought me back to realities.

Suddenly I heard the whirr of an aeroplane, and impulsively I ran out of the door and out from under the trees for the purpose of getting a view of the machine.

Instantly I was seized and literally dragged back into the hut by several men.

The "General" promptly developed another spasm of fury and, gun in hand, approached me in a menacing manner.

"What do you mean by exposing our whereabouts to the enemy?" he snarled.

"I am very sorry," I replied. "But I did it on the impulse of the moment, without thinking. It was just curiosity that prompted my action."

"Another false move on your part, and your life will pay the price," he growled. "Don't stir from this hut again without permission, understand that! *Carrajo!* You had better puzzle your brains by thinking out a way to get money from your many friends, or we shall have to try our special method of helping you, which you won't find very pleasant. How would you like to lose one of your ears? Understand, we don't play here!"

With this admonition he walked out with his officers and I lay back in my hammock to think.

It was not long before they returned. They had evidently been holding a consultation about my case. Producing a fountain pen and paper, the "General" commanded me to sit down and write a letter to anyone I thought best, asking for fifty thousand dollars to be paid to the bearer without question, adding that my life depended on the safe return of the messenger with the money.

As I was certain I could not raise more than ten thousand dollars at the utmost, I continued my arguments, determined to make him understand the wisdom of reducing the amount.

The "General" had spoken of "the caves" as being my ultimate destination in the event of the money not coming quickly, and with a shudder I realized the fate in store for me. Throughout the vast mountain ranges of Santo Domingo there are numerous caves, some of which penetrate right into the heart of the hills. These veritable natural forts are known only to the outlaws, who use them as storehouses and retreats. A man immured in one of the more distant caves could never escape, for a solitary armed guard could look after a thousand prisoners; and the chances are

"'What do you mean by exposing our whereabouts to the enemy?' he snarled."

that if a man's ransom-money did not arrive he would be left there to die!

I must admit that the mention of these living tombs gave me a very uneasy feeling. Desperation made my wits extra nimble, and finally I appealed to the "General's" patriotic sentiments, stating that if I did not return in two or three days, the British Consul would communicate with the Naval Base at Jamaica, and in less than a week a British warship would be acting in conjunction with the Americans, and two thousand British bluejackets would be stationed on the Island. Thus the object for which he professed to be fighting—the removal of foreigners—would be frustrated.

This line of argument seemed to weaken the bandit's attitude, and eventually he compromised and allowed me to ask for ten thousand dollars.

The letter, which was written in English, was submitted to a well-educated Dominican, who translated the context into Spanish for the edification of the "General" and his officers.

After a messenger had been dispatched with my letter, I got into conversation with this educated native, who explained that he, like myself, had been forcibly abducted and was now kept a prisoner for the purpose of letter-writing, translating, and so on. He fully realized the futility of the bandits' cause, bolstered up by such despicable methods, but saw no chance to escape.

Later in the afternoon the "General" came into the hut and asked me if I would like to witness the *gavilleros* drilling. He was in an affable mood, which I thought it would be a pity to change, so, with as much good grace as I could command, I accompanied him to a clearing where forty odd men were paraded in a ragged line. Bidding me remain under cover of a tree, the "General" advanced upon this party and shouted out various orders. It was the greatest military burlesque imaginable. When he ordered "Left turn!" some of them turned to the left, but the remainder turned to the right, and by the time he had issued half-a-dozen more complicated orders he had his men facing every conceivable point of the compass, and not three of them were in a straight line or equally spaced.

Inwardly I was exploding with laughter, but I dared not show it for fear of causing the "General's" mood to change. A bunch of "rookies" acting in this manner after three days at recruit drill would have sent any ordinary drill-instructor into a paroxysm of rage, but the "General" appeared to be quite satisfied.

After about twenty minutes of this chaotic "drill" he dismissed the men by the simple expedient of walking over to where I was standing, the men dispersing in every direction.

With a great show of pride the "General" told me: "We have over four hundred well-armed and drilled men, such as these you see, and nearly three thousand sworn recruits in various parts of the country for whom we are endeavouring to buy arms. When they are all equipped and drilled we will run all the Yankee devils out of Santo Domingo!"

When we returned to the hut, I found that the next hammock to mine was occupied by a Dominican. He was shaking with sobs and had evidently been tortured or roughly handled.

"Look at that miserable coward and traitor!" snarled the "General." "He has four thousand dollars in the bank and will not give a thousand to the Cause. He does nothing but cry like a girl, and has refused to eat since we brought him here yesterday. *Carrajo!*" Developing another fit of fury, he drew his gun and held the muzzle against the poor wretch's head. "I've a good mind to shoot him and put him out of his misery!" he added.

Later in the afternoon a messenger, who had been dispatched two hours previously, returned with a sack of merchandise he had obtained at a store. I had no idea we were in such close proximity to a settlement or town. Obviously I had been brought to the camp by a circuitous route, which left me utterly bewildered as to my present location.

The "General" handed me out a pair of boots and socks. "You will need these," he said, "as I am sending you farther away in the morning. In fact, I don't know that it wouldn't be better to send you to the caves at once with this fellow here," nodding in the direction of the man in the hammock.

I thanked him for the boots and socks, adding, "But why send me farther away? I hope it won't be necessary."

"It certainly will be if your friends fail to send the money," he told me, warningly.

I then asked for water to bathe my feet and legs, and was given some. I spent the time until dark picking out thorns from my feet and rubbing salt on the cuts and abrasions.

While I was thus occupied I heard the "General" giving orders for double guards and officers to be placed at all outposts during the night.

I kept my shoes on and spent a very anxious night without sleep, expecting a surprise attack by the United States marines.

This, I knew, would greatly increase the risk I ran, as I should be exposed to the fire of the attacking forces and, in the event of them proving victorious, the *gavilleros*, rather than let me escape, would most assuredly shoot me out of sheer vindictiveness.

Thus I was in the paradoxical position of hoping that no attempt would be made at any rescue.

At daybreak the camp was astir. While coffee was being served, the "General" said to me: "You will now leave with these six men. For the present you will go to the next camp, and I will join you later."

Soon after we set out on foot, but had only been marching some three or four minutes when rifle firing started and bullets went singing through the trees in all directions. Instinctively I dropped down beside a large fallen tree, hoping that my escort would either occupy themselves in fighting or run away, thus giving me a chance to escape to the marines, who I judged were attacking. I had no such luck, however, for one of the men promptly kicked me in the side and two more pulled me out and dragged me along hurriedly, saying: "We'll shoot you like a dog if you fall down again."

The firing increased. "Quick!" one of the men called out. "Get down here!" He pointed to an almost perpendicular drop over the rocks. "Impossible!" I cried, so they dragged me back to where a tree had fallen. Beside it was a hanging bush-rope. Two men climbed down first, and when I hesitated, another pointed a gun at my head and forced me to follow. I could only have been half-way down when the boots of the man following caught my hands, causing me to release my hold, and I fell ten feet and landed on the loose rocks below, hurting my ankle. The ruffians, however, at once urged me on at a run, striking me several times and cursing me in the vilest language of their vocabulary.

We crossed a ravine and struggled up the other side, which, being sparsely covered with trees, must have been in full view of the marines. I rolled up my sleeves to expose my white skin as a precaution against their fire.

Evidently they had not seen us, however, and the firing ceased.

At the top we entered dense jungle again. Here several men and the two girls from the camp caught us up and went on in advance.

After about an hour and a half we arrived at a small clearing where several members of the band were assembled. Being much exhausted and parched with thirst, I was thankful to sit down and suck the dew-laden leaves. Four wounded *gavilleros* struggled in soon afterwards, followed by the "General" and the rest of the band.

After sitting down for half an hour we moved on again, leaving the wounded, the two girls, and a few men behind. Finally we came to another clearing, containing a partly roofless hut, which became our next camp.

Later the balance of the men arrived, with their salvaged belongings from the former camp. Hammocks were put up among the trees, one being assigned to me; but, although I had not slept for two nights and felt very drowsy, it was impossible to sleep owing to my excited condition.

The men who were not otherwise engaged were busy cleaning their guns, and filling empty cartridge cases with powder and bullets, the latter being made from lead or pewter which they cast in moulds. The "General" went round and counted each man's empty shells and also the full cartridges, thus keeping a check on every detail.

Just before sundown double guards were again placed on outpost duty.

Native lamps and candles were lighted in the hut and in the hastily-improvised shelters around the camp, which caused me alarm, as the lights would betray the position to the marines. I mentioned my fears to the interpreter, but he merely smiled. "The bandits have their scouts in every town all over the country," he said, "and every move made by the marines is reported. The skirmish this morning was caused by a small marine patrol stumbling blindly on to the camp, after which the "General" thought it prudent to vacate the position."

At about half-past eight that evening, the "General" came into the hut and handed me a letter. "The messenger we sent with your letter of yesterday has returned with the money," he told me, "so you can go home in the morning."

The letter, it appeared, was from our agent. He expressed sorrow at my unfortunate abduction, adding that owing to the absence of the Director, who had gone to New York, he was unable to obtain any money from the bank, but had sent two thousand dollars, being all the available cash he had on hand. He trusted I could obtain my release by promising to pay the balance upon my return.

Apparently the "General" had not counted the money yet, for as soon as I translated the letter, he flew into another violent rage. "*Carrajo!*" he exclaimed, and drawing the inevitable gun, started to gesticulate. "Now you will pay more!" he raved. "I shall make them pay half a million before I release you, considering how much money they have made in this country!"

With this cheering remark he stalked out of the hut, followed by the crowd that had gathered, all of whom seemed to be pleased at the advanced price demanded. I, needless to say, was sadly disappointed, and spent another sleepless night trying to think out a way to effect my release or escape.

The following morning, the "General" had a talk with me in the presence of some of his chief officers, and finally decided to release me, on three conditions.

First, I was to write to the administrators of the sugar estates in the district, and persuade them to use their influence to have the United States forces removed from Santo Domingo.

Secondly, I was to pay three thousand dollars by the following Wednesday, October 5th, three thousand at the end of October, a thousand at the end of November, and another thousand at the end of December.

Thirdly, I was to do all in my power to help the Republic at any time at their bidding, they in return promising not to damage my cane-fields and guaranteeing that I should get plenty of labour for the crops, without being molested in any way in the future.

I must point out that their promises only applied to my own person and the property of the plantation of which I was administrator. Had this been extended to all the estates, and had these *insurrectos* been trustworthy, it is obvious that the United States forces could have been withdrawn quite safely.

However, "needs must when the devil drives," so I promised all that was demanded of me, excepting anything detrimental to any person or society. I added that, as I was a poor man and unable to pay the instalments out of my own funds, the debt would be upon the firm.

The "General" allowed these two provisos which, as I thought then, left me fairly free of personal responsibility.

Having breakfasted on dried beef, plantains, and coffee, I was given an escort of six armed *gavilleros*, who took me along a number of devious trails and finally abandoned me, having pointed out the direction I should take.

Some miles farther on I came across a Dominican working in a garden near a shanty. I prevailed upon this man to guide me to the nearest sugar estate, in return for which I promised him twenty dollars.

A walk of several miles brought us to a river, where my guide secured a small row-boat, in which he rowed me up-stream and landed me near a roadway.

One hour's journeying, and we arrived at Colonia Cubana, belonging to the Santa Fé estate, and occupied by the Major-domo. From here I telephoned to the manager of our own estate asking him to notify my wife and the United States authorities of my return; also to send a conveyance for me, and to advise the Major-domo to pay twenty dollars to my guide.

"I fell ten feet and landed on the loose rocks below."

While sitting in the parlour of the Major-domo's house, I drank some milk, but could not eat, for I

was choking with emotion and could hardly relate my story.

A little later the manager and some of his office staff came over in a limousine, gave me a hearty welcome, and then drove me home, where I arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon. I was met by my wife, who sobbed on my shoulder with joy at my return after an absence of three days—the longest and most eventful three days I have ever spent.

I had only just bathed and changed my clothes—that is, the dungaree trousers and pyjamas, or what was left of them—and was lying down to enjoy a well-earned sleep, when the U.S. Provost Marshal called, and put me through the "third degree" of cross-questioning for three solid hours.

He asked such questions as: "What kind of soil did you see at the various places? What kind of trees and undergrowth?"

These and a host of other questions too numerous to mention were volleyed at me, but I am afraid I did not answer them as well as a military scout would have done. However, I gave him a minute description of everything and everybody around the camp, including the two poor girls detained there.

The following day I met the District Commander, who informed me I had been kept prisoner in the district of Jagual, as verified by the skirmish of the 29th.

The same evening I was much startled to read on the front page of the local newspaper an article with a caption in large type, describing my return, my experiences, and what I had told the Provost Marshal.

My cross-questioner of the previous day had evidently been guilty of a breach of confidence, and, regardless of his promise to treat the matter confidentially, had told the story, thus placing my life in jeopardy with the *insurrectos*.

The following day I packed up and took my wife into a large town for safety. From here I communicated with the managers of the various sugar estates, but their replies did not indicate any desire to fall in with the wishes of "General" Ramon Nateras, while the president of my firm stated that he had no intention of paying the eight thousand dollars balance due for my release.

Four days later, on October 6th, I travelled into Santo Domingo City and interviewed the military governor of the island, who contended that the *gavilleros* were allied with and tools of the "Political National Party."

Later I related my experiences to the British Consul, who advised me to keep away from the out-lying districts until such time as the political situation was easier.

A week later I had the pleasure of being introduced to the chief scout of the U.S. forces, an officer who had already captured thirty of Nateras' band, including the two girls previously mentioned. Little did I dream that the meagre information I had been able to give the military authorities would carry out my promise to the girls, and at the same time strike a severe blow at my late captors!

As everyone agreed that it would be extremely imprudent for me to return to the plantation, I was forced to send in my resignation. Thus, by the action of these bandits, I was deprived of position, friends, and what I have considered home for the past twenty-six years, and forced into exile. This, needless to say, is a bitter blow to me. My grief is shared by my dear wife, who, regardless of my protests, insistently assumes the responsibility for my abduction in that she, on the impulse of the moment, deprived me of my only means of defence by hiding my gun. She thought she could thus prevent me getting into trouble by shooting; but she did not realize the determined ferocity or the nature of the mission of our unwelcome callers.

My own comment upon my wife's action is that it was a blessing in disguise. Had she not hidden my gun and unbarred the back door, the *gavilleros* would undoubtedly have set the house on fire and smoked us out. I, on the other hand, should have offered resistance by firing into them, and in all probability they would then have killed the lot of us.

AN ISLAND PARADISE

By Thomas J. McMahon, F.R.G.S.

Fierce cannibals fifty years ago, the Fijians are to-day progressive, civilized, and thoroughly lovable people. Spite of the change, they have preserved many of their charming old customs, and in this article Mr. McMahon describes some of the interesting things he saw and heard during his recent sojourn in the Islands.

A wonderful head of hair. Baldness is unknown among the Fijians.

THERE are few better examples of the success of British administration in dealing with native peoples than that of the Fiji Islands. Truculent cannibals fifty years ago, the Fijians are to-day a progressive, dignified, thoroughly civilized and educated people. They are handsome, intelligent, lovable folk, conspicuous among the various races inhabiting the South-Sea Islands.

The Fiji Islands are seven thousand five hundred square miles in extent, made up of two large islands and two hundred and forty smaller ones. Ninety of the islands are inhabited, having a general population of eighty-five thousand Fijians, sixty-one thousand Hindus, four thousand whites, and three thousand Chinese. The group lies about equidistant between Australia and New Zealand, and owing to the opening of the Panama Canal is the most central land in the whole of the South Pacific. The climate of the islands is good, malaria and other tropic ailments being quite unknown. Commercially, Fiji is making vast strides, the principal products being sugar, bananas, and coconuts.

How this interesting and resourceful group came into British ownership is told in the story of the last native king, Thakambau by name, a very remarkable character in many ways, and whose memory is still reverenced by the natives.

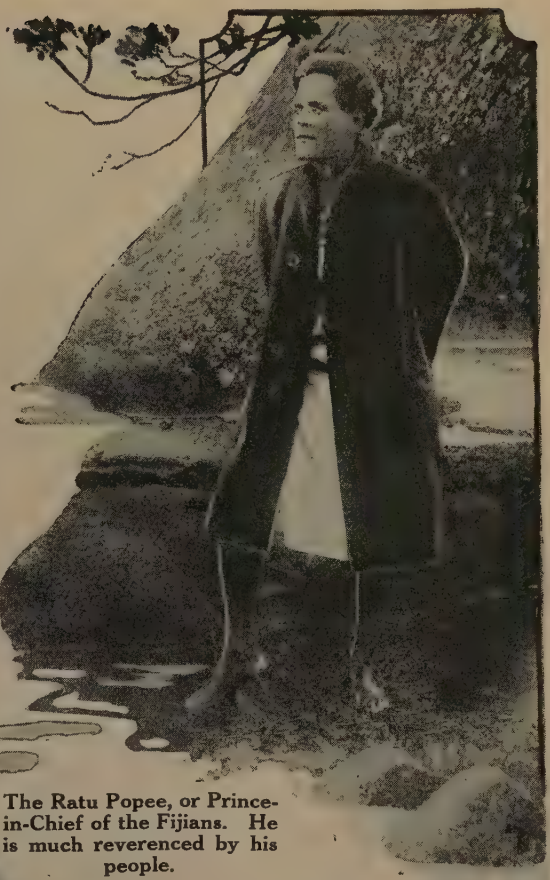
Thakambau was a powerful man, standing over six feet in height and possessed of an impressive personality. From being the petty chief of a small island he progressed until he conquered the whole of Fiji and had himself proclaimed king. At that time settlers of all nations, but particularly British and American, came to Fiji and began many enterprises, especially the cultivation of cotton. Thakambau allowed them a form of constitutional government, but he remained supreme ruler, fierce and jealous of his rights. He loved to live and pose in a truly regal manner; he had a fine palace, handsomely furnished; his wardrobe was extensive; his table laden with European luxuries. On public occasions he delighted to appear wearing a golden crown and a robe of purple silk.

The time came, however, when His Majesty fell out with his subjects, particularly the Americans. The King's extravagance had brought his revenues into a very low state, and the Americans, through their Consul, accused him of inciting the natives to steal their property. The Consul demanded forty thousand dollars by way of reparation.

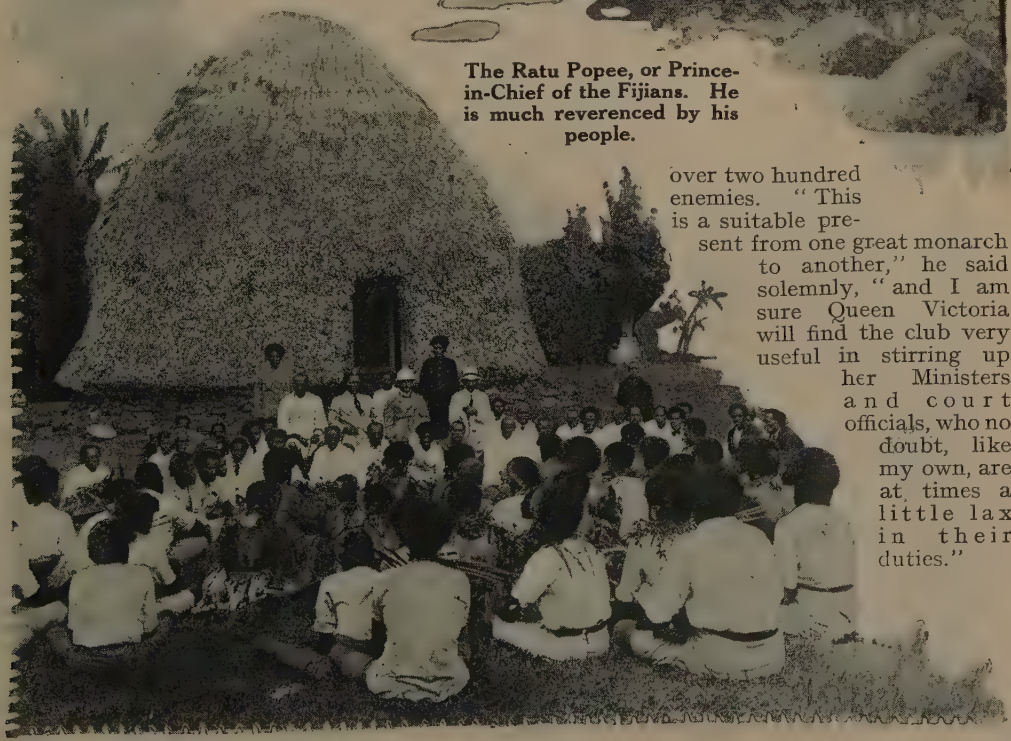
Thakambau angrily refused, and so a little later the U.S. Government sent a warship to insist on the Consul's claim. For some months it looked as if the Fiji Islands were to become American property,

but the British missionaries persuaded the King to seek British protection and advice. At first the British Government refused to consider Thakambau's appeal, but later, when it was backed by the whole of the Fijian natives and the British settlers, the Government decided to set up British administration and ownership, giving the natives full freedom. From that moment the commercial advance of Fiji was assured.

There was great joy among the natives when Queen Victoria sent some warships to Fiji to show that she meant to protect them, and a grand public function took place when King Thakambau formally ceded his kingdom to the British. On this occasion the King appeared in a silk hat, much too small for his enormous head, a smart European suit, and carrying a gold-mounted walking-stick, a present from the Queen. The King's gift to Queen Victoria was a decidedly uncommon one. He handed over to the British representative, the senior naval officer, a large, highly ornamental club which he had often used in his old tribal battles and with which, he claimed, he had killed over two hundred enemies. "This is a suitable present from one great monarch to another," he said solemnly, "and I am sure Queen Victoria will find the club very useful in stirring up her Ministers and court officials, who no doubt, like my own, are at times a little lax in their duties."



The Ratu Popee, or Prince-in-Chief of the Fijians. He is much reverenced by his people.



A Fijian native Parliament. The British Commissioner is seen seated in the centre.

A picturesque island sailing craft.

The Fijians have undoubtedly prospered under British protection. They are wealthy, for all island lands belong to them, and the big annual rentals they draw from various British enterprises make them quite independent.

A street scene in a Fijian town.

Playing a native "piano," a rounded piece of wood beaten with short, heavy clubs.

A "lali," or Fijian bell.

A spear dance at Somo-Somo.

The brewing of kava for an important public ceremony.

They are very loyal to the British crown, and during the late war sent some three hundred men to fight for the King.

The missions have done good work in educating them, and to-day it is quite a common thing to find Fijians engaged in various profitable undertakings, many being skilled tradesmen and others holding responsible positions in the Government service. Most of the old and unprogressive customs are rapidly dying out, and the status of women has been considerably raised. Indeed, they are now treated with as much courtesy and respect as are European women. Fifty years ago they were mere slaves and chattels of the men; to-day they are their equals and companions. The *nandis*, the wives of the *Rokos*, or native princes, are invariably women of superior education, and by their example and influence have done much to lift the other women.

The modern Fijian woman dresses well, beautifies her home, and brings up her children in a healthy fashion. At the same time they are not losing their Fijian individuality, and retain many charming manners and customs. One of their customs is as amusing as it is effective. Bachelors are not tolerated in Fiji. Unrequited love, dislike of women, small incomes, and the various excuses of bachelors in other countries are not accepted. Every man must get married, says public opinion, and to assist towards this desirable end there is in every native town a women's vigilance committee—what might be called, in fact, a "Make-'Em-Get-Married" society. When a young lady of Fiji comes to marriageable age and has no lover, her mother arranges seven or more long curls at the back of her daughter's head, on the left side. Then, dressed in her best, the daughter saunters round the town "making eyes" in a discreet fashion at all the eligible bachelors. If after a few days no offers of marriage come along, the mother puts some white pigment over the curls to make them look grey. This is intended to indicate that her daughter is going grey with worry and regret, and that the bachelors are not as gallant as they should be. This usually has the desired effect, and in a few days the young lady is besieged with matrimonial offers, the successful suitor finally leaving at the girl's house his "card"—a small whale's tooth!

The progressiveness of the Fijians is plainly manifest in their breaking away from the old tribal custom of communism. Nowadays the Fijian man objects to sharing his money, his pipe, his work, and his food, while his womenfolk resent their friends wearing their dresses and using their cooking-pots. All these things the ancient law allowed, and many of the very old men would naturally like to see them continue. In these days, however, the Fijian man works hard in the sugar fields or banana plantations, and he does not see the force of allowing the grandfathers of his tribe and town to say what he shall do with his earnings. The British administration encourages the progressive Fijians, and so this old tribal communism will be ended in the next few years.

Spite of this progress, however, the Fijians cling to many of the old customs, especially in their love of ceremonial. Be it a wedding, a feast, a native Parliament, or a funeral, the Fijians like plenty of ceremony. The most elaborate dresses of native *tappa*, or cloth, with croton leaves, ferns and flowers, are worn, and the arrangement and colouring of these ceremonial dresses show that the Fijians have well-developed artistic tastes. There is no better opportunity of seeing Fijian ceremonial than at a native Parliament.

The British administration has always allowed the natives their own form of government—rule by their *Rokos*, or chiefs. For this purpose the group has been divided into provinces, districts, and towns. A province comprises many districts and towns, ruled by a *Roko*. A *Buli*, or minor chief, is responsible for a district, and every town has its mayor. From the humblest native to the highest prince, all have a say in the native government, and through the government with the Governor of the group and the British Parliament. Each year a native Parliament is held in the principal town of a province, when representatives come from every district. Modern Fiji towns are quite up-to-date in many respects, and native municipal laws insist on a healthy situation, sanitation, drainage, water supply, neat houses, gardens, and well-made roads. In every large town is a hall termed a *bose*, and here all public functions are held, especially the Parliaments.

A *bose* is a substantial-looking building, and the interior is made very attractive with the beautiful Fijian work called *sinnet*. This is coconut fibre woven in intricate designs and painted black and white. The dining-room of Government House at Suva, the capital, is finished in this way, and presents a most striking appearance. At the present time three hundred native artists and builders are erecting a palace for the Governor which, when finished, will be the most unique administrative building in the British Empire. This palace is the gift of the Fijians to the Governor, and is intended to commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales.

The Commissioner for Native Affairs, as representative of the Governor, usually attends the opening of a native Parliament. During the proceedings, which generally last two or three days, thousands of natives from all over a province assemble in the town.

At eleven o'clock on the opening day a *lali*, or native bell (a hollowed-out log closed

How Fijian girls plait their hair to indicate that they are seeking a husband.

In the centre is the Roko, or Prince, of Somo-Somo. The Author is on the left, while the Commissioner for Native Affairs is on the right.

The dining-room of Government House, Suva, showing the beautiful decorations in native "sinnet" work.

at the ends and struck with two short heavy clubs) is beaten to notify members of the Parliament that they must be in the House in readiness to receive the Commissioner, the *Roko*, and any visitors of note who may be in the town; and the cheers of the people tell of the approach of the Royal party.

The Commissioner and *Roko* take their places on a slightly raised dais, and then a chief, the master of ceremonies, offers them welcome and

presents any new members. All this is accompanied with much clapping of hands and singing of native songs. Next comes the most important ceremony of all —the presentation of the *kava* cup. Young men of high birth, good looks, and stalwart figures carry out this ceremony. At the command of the scribe, or Clerk of the House, the front door of the *bose* is thrown open to admit the "brewer" and his assistants in preparing and presenting the *kava*.

Led by a native policeman, the *kava* "officials," as they are termed, approach the dais and are presented to the Commissioner and *Roko*. They then squat down on beautiful Fijian mats, and a huge wooden bowl, highly ornamented with pearl and shells, is set in front of the "brewer." A bunch of *yangona*, the shrub from the roots of which the *kava* is made, is next brought in, then a pail of water, and lastly a tray of tiny cups made of coconut shells. The brewing of the *kava* takes time, but during the process the members of Parliament sing songs telling of the virtues of *kava*, and the story of its presentation, the oldest of all Fijian customs.

There is quite a stir of excitement when the "brewer" announces that the *kava* is ready, and the master of ceremonies stands and calls for a cup to be presented to the Commissioner. A young official walks to the dais and, kneeling, presents the cup, the members meanwhile clapping their hands vigorously—the Fijian way of wishing good luck and long life to the drinker. Cups are afterwards presented to the *Roko*, the principal visitors, the chiefs, and so on down to the rank and file of the House. A particular part of this ceremony is that on no account must the cup, after the contents have been consumed, be handed back to the official presenting it. Instead, the cup is sent with a vigorous spin into the middle of the floor; and the longer it spins the more it conveys appreciation. In olden times it was a deadly insult to refuse *kava*; even to-day it is considered very bad form. The presentation of *kava* takes up a good deal of time, and the business of Parliament is usually held over until the afternoon sitting.

Kava, it should be explained, is the national drink of the Fijians, but it is not in the least intoxicating. Fijian hospitality is nothing without the presentation of *kava* to a guest, and when a lady Fijian presents you with a cup of *kava* she is paying you the highest compliment at her command. *Kava* is made by the crushing and pounding of the roots of the shrub *yangona*, which grows about the creeks of the Islands, but is also cultivated in large farm areas. The pounded root is mixed with water, and then, by a long process of straining through coconut fibre, the drink is made ready for consumption. It is of a yellow-green colour, disagreeable in taste, and it takes time for Europeans to acquire a liking for it, as many come to do. It is considered by doctors to be a very useful drink, and it is a well-known fact that Fijians never die from kidney diseases.

A Fijian native Parliament is little different to other assemblies of the kind. There is much debate about finance and the health and schooling of the people. The British Government allows each province so much money every year for road-making, the improvement of towns, the building of schools, the upkeep of hospitals, and the maintenance of trading canoes; and all these matters are discussed. The deliberations of a native Parliament are in due course presented to the Governor and the Fiji general Parliament, in which the natives are represented by two *Rokos*.

Next in importance to the drinking of *kava* comes the Fijian custom of the *meke*, or national dance. As many as two hundred young natives, most gorgeously dressed, will take part in a *meke*, which may be described as a legend told in song and dance. Sometimes it deals with a famous tribal battle of old. The dancers carry either spears or clubs, and go through many of the movements of the battle—the stealthy approach to the enemy's lines, the hurly-burly of the combat, and then the triumphant return when the warriors are greeted by their chiefs, their sages, and their women. For an hour or more, without the least interval, a *meke* will continue its way, every action explaining itself, every step most precisely executed. The leaders of the *mekes* are always particularly fine men, and they wear wonderful *tappa* robes with trains four to five yards long, which they manage with all the grace of a court lady.

There are other *mekes* in which men and women take part, and these tell of love, the hunting of the turtle, or other phases of native life in which men and women join. Then there is the sit-down *meke*, mostly performed by women, and in which a woman's duties are depicted. For all *mekes*, bands of women and children supply vocal music. The music is not melodious, but it marks the time well, the great essential. Sometimes a "Fiji piano" is used to accompany a *meke*. This is a thick, rounded, highly-polished piece of ebony held in the arms of one man while another, the pianist, beats it vigorously with two short heavy clubs. Easy as the playing looks, it is only an expert who can produce the proper sort of music. To the European ear it is nothing but a sharp, ear-splitting tattoo, very trying when carried on for hours without a moment's stop.

It is a strange thing that Fijian native music is so lacking in tunefulness, for they have a very keen ear for civilized music. As singers the Fijian men are considered by

many travellers to have the finest bass voices in the world. Tenors of exceptional sweetness and fullness can also be heard, while the voices of the women can be trained with excellent results. At the mission churches singing by native choirs can be heard which is positively wonderful. Attached to the Fijian police force in Suva is a brass band, conducted by a full-blooded Fijian, which renders perfect music. Every Sunday night, after church, this band plays in the city square and the citizens turn out to listen to it.

No description of Fiji would be complete without a reference to the leper island of Makogai. This is a perfectly beautiful spot, having a remarkable climate, and here there has been set up a complete establishment for the curing of lepers—whites, Hindus, Chinese, and natives from all the British islands in the South Seas. The establishment is a series of lovely gardens, with brightly-painted buildings. Some ten years ago when the station was first opened, six hundred lepers were congregated on the island. To-day, owing to the wonders of science and the devotion of a staff of noble Britishers, the number of lepers has been reduced to fewer than two hundred. Every month cures are reported and inmates set at liberty. The management of the establishment and the success of the cures is a crowning triumph of British administration and ideals.

Fiji is one of the most remarkable places in the wide world for the tourist. Few countries have grander mountain and river scenery to offer. The atmospheric colour-effects on the mountains are indescribably beautiful, and the hills, clothed in magnificent tropic trees and flowering shrubs, are full of game, while the rivers teem with fish. The cool, even, bracing climate is a great surprise, giving these mountains, which run to seven thousand feet at the highest, a great attraction to visitors.

Compared with other island groups of the South Seas, Fiji has made immense progress, though at the present time the Indian settlers are giving a great deal of trouble by refusing to work and to accept the reasonable wages and conditions of life which the British administration assures them. When this difficulty is settled, Fiji will make a wonderful commercial advance. Suva, the capital of the group, is a modern city with every up-to-date convenience, and its harbour, reckoned one of the safest in the South Pacific islands, will undoubtedly during the next decade become one of the busiest in the world. With the progress of the islands the natives are bound to increase in numbers, and the great hope is that as they advance in the arts of civilization they will not altogether lose their present individuality, which is charming in every respect. The British administration, assisted by the missions, is striving energetically, side by side with educating them, to encourage them to retain their native characteristics.

A Remarkable Rick.

THE lofty "rick" seen in this photograph is probably unique, for it consists of about a hundred and twenty tons of old horseshoes collected in small consignments from various blacksmiths in the neighbourhood of Trowbridge, Wilts. "And what is the use of such a collection?" you will naturally ask. Well, these old horseshoes, it appears, are particularly suitable for melting down for cutlery steel, the metal having been tempered to just the right hardness by the beat of the horses' hoofs and the wear and tear of the roads. These particular horseshoes will probably be sent to Cardiff for sale, but some of them are actually exported.

Looking Backwards

THE WIDE WORLD'S 25th Birthday

by

THE EDITOR

When THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE "came of age" four years ago, just after the Great War, the time was not considered propitious to say much about it, particularly as most of us were "otherwise engaged." This month, however, the Magazine celebrates its twenty-fifth birthday, and I have taken the opportunity, in the following pages, of indulging in a few reminiscences concerning outstanding events in our history that may be found of interest. No publication ever had a more loyal body of readers, and I should like to thank them, one and all, for the unfailing support that has made it possible for us to reach our twenty-fifth milestone, still going strong and full of enthusiasm for the future.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago this month THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE first made its bow to the British public — to be received with an appreciation which has never since shown any signs of slackening. There had been nothing like it before; it was unique then; it is unique now. Just as its big brother the *Strand* had broken new ground with its lavish illustrations and first-class fiction by leading authors, so THE WIDE WORLD, with its true stories, its remarkable photographs, and its authoritative records of travel and adventure in every clime, tapped a field that had not previously been developed.

How well I remember the strenuous days—and nights!—that went to the preparation of the first number! When you are launching an ordinary magazine you simply gather round you a suitable corps of writers and artists, explain to them exactly what you want, and generally "get on with it." In the case of THE WIDE WORLD, however, this process was obviously impossible. The material could not be manufactured; it had to be *found;* and before we could collect the stories of real adventure we required we had to hunt out men who had been through such experiences and persuade them to write. It was a terribly slow and uphill business, but at last it was accomplished, and Number One went out to the world as something entirely different in conception, contents, and spirit from any other magazine that had ever been

Louis de Rougemont as he appeared just before his death.

Photo: H. W. Barnett.

published. It looks rather old-fashioned to-day, with its pink cover, its small-type headings, and severely plain make-up, but the material it contained was of first-class interest, contributed by men whose names were household words—Dr. Nansen, Sir George Baden-Powell, Professor A. C. Haddon, Sir Frank Swettenham, Admiral Sir E. Ommanney, and others.

Press and public alike gave it a very enthusiastic reception, though the critics said that we should never be able to keep up the standard we had set ourselves. How far that prophecy has been justified I must leave it to our readers to decide.

A STROKE OF LUCK.

Within a very few weeks of the publication of No. 2 a most amazing stroke of luck befell the infant WIDE WORLD—the sort of happening that one reads about in fiction but seldom or never encounters in real life.

One day early in 1898 there walked into the offices of the new magazine a shabbily-dressed man apparently about sixty years old. He had a thin, striking face which, though seamed with countless wrinkles, yet conveyed an odd suggestion of youth. His eyes were particularly bright and keen, and his high forehead was crowned by a thick shock of iron-grey hair.

The stranger—who spoke in odd, jerky little sentences, for all the world like the English of a French child—expressed a wish to see the Editor on private and particular business, and he brought forth a letter of introduction from Mr. Henniker Heaton, at that time M.P. for Canterbury, and the pioneer of Imperial penny postage.

Mr. Henniker Heaton's note was sufficiently impressive. It ran somewhat as follows: *"I send you a man who has a story to tell which, if true, will stagger the world."*

Now stories calculated to stagger the world are never too plentiful, and no journalist worthy of his salt would care to miss one, and the result was that the caller was speedily shown into the Editor's room, where he perched himself nervously on the edge of a chair.

"I am Louis de Rougemont," he said simply.

Then, in response to questions, he proceeded to outline the astounding life-history

THE
WIDE WORLD
MAGAZINE
"TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION"
CHIEF CONTENTS
FOR FULL CONTENTS see over.
THE ROMANCE OF SEAL HUNTING.
An Interview with Sir Geo. Baden-Powell.
HOUSES IN AIR AND IN WATER.
THE PERILS of GORDON'S POSTMAN.
TRAGEDIES OF MONT BLANC.
HOW THE NORTH POLE WILL BE REACHED.
By Dr. Fridtjof Nansen.
A BATTLE ROYAL WITH A TIGER.
A True Story.
THE CRUISE of THE SLAVER 'CARL.
A True Story. Told by Vice-Admiral Markham.
AND MANY OTHER ARTICLES AND STORIES.
ASTOUNDING PHOTOGRAPHS
THRILLING ADVENTURES
No 1 VOL 1
AN Illustrated Monthly.

A reproduction of the cover of Number One of "The Wide World Magazine."

that was so soon destined to make both himself and the new magazine famous all over the world—the story that outdid "Robinson Crusoe," and was later described as "the most amazing experience a man ever lived to tell."

When the whole narrative had been taken down in shorthand, and de Rougemont's statements rigorously tested by leading scientists, explorers, and other authorities, without shaking his testimony, we became convinced that we had in our hands the journalistic "scoop" of the century, and we resolved to make the most of it. The story was put into proper shape, checked and re-checked, and finally, in No. 5 of THE WIDE WORLD, the first long instalment was published.

The effect was electrical! Within a day or so, as it seemed, the whole world was ringing with de Rougemont's fame. Newspaper men in shoals clamoured for interviews and portraits; foreign journals cabled for rights of reproduction; notable hostesses sent invitations requesting the latest "lion" to honour their gatherings; famous institutions asked for lectures—and the public bought hundreds of thousands of copies of THE WIDE WORLD as fast as the presses could run them off. Best test of notoriety, perhaps, was the fact that de Rougemont was asked to give sittings to Mr. John Tussaud, of the famous waxwork exhibition, and ere long a striking portrait model was on view in the great galleries in the Marylebone Road.

From being a nonentity from the back o' beyond the old man suddenly found himself world-famous. On his way to his modest lodging he was recognized and mobbed by vast crowds, and we had to spirit him out of the way, for he was a shy man, and his new popularity frightened him.

Instead of waning, public interest in the story appeared to grow daily. Comic papers joked about a new "Missing Link" and the "Wild Man of Borneo," and comedians worked all sorts of de Rougemont "gags," but the great British public had taken this bewrinkled, unassuming wanderer to their hearts, and the demand for the magazine became phenomenal. Finally a special honour (unique, surely, for a mere layman) was paid to the adventurer—he was asked to deliver a lecture on his experiences to the great British Association for the Advancement of Science, perhaps the leading institution of its kind in the world. By this time de Rougemont's English had vastly improved, and—garbed in correct evening dress—he duly delivered his lecture at the annual Congress at Bristol, before an audience of thousands, among whom were leaders of politics, science, and the fashionable world. So successful was de Rougemont's first appearance on the lecture platform that arrangements were made for him to go on tour. Meanwhile his amazing story had been translated into many tongues and was being read all over the world. It is safe to say that no story-teller ever had a bigger public.

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE.

And then, like a bolt from the blue, came the first hint of trouble. The Editor of a leading London daily newspaper took exception to the story and declined to believe that de Rougemont was telling the truth. The journal published a column-length criticism of the narrative, with a query-mark as a heading, and followed it up day by day with fresh attacks.

All the time, too, the paper made special efforts to trace de Rougemont's origin, which was shrouded in mystery. On September 26th the newspaper announced that all attempts to trace his birth and parentage had failed, and the next day, in the course of a leading article, alleged that de Rougemont had virtually retired from defending himself against expert criticism.

A lengthy but inconclusive reply from de Rougemont was printed, and then on October 5th, the newspaper published, under the title, "The Green-Rougemont Case," statements that proved to be the beginning of the end. A Mr. F. W. Solomon, representative of a company with offices in Finsbury Square, London, was able to identify de Rougemont as "Mr. Green," a Swiss gentleman, of the firm of McQuettan and Green, who, during the previous May, had approached him with an offer to negotiate a wonderful new diving-apparatus invention. It was then discovered that when de Rougemont had worked his passage to Europe in the steamship *Waikato* he had been given his discharge in the name of "Grien."

On October 7th the newspaper came out with the heading, "The Bubble Burst," and gave more details of de Rougemont's parentage. He was Henry Louis Grin, it said, born near Yverdon, a town in the Canton Vaud, on the borders of Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland, in 1847. Further particulars appeared the following day under the uncompromising title, "The de Rougemont Fraud." De Rougemont, the paper stated, was Henry Louis Grin, the son of a Swiss farmer. He had started life "in the more intelligent branches of domestic service," and turned up in Australia in the train of Sir W. C. F. Robinson, Governor of Western Australia.

Pictures of his father's farm at Gressy, Switzerland, and of the house where his mother still resided were published in subsequent issues, and on October 18th, tireless to the end, the newspaper announced that "de Rougemont" had returned to Australia.

The great "de Rougemont Bubble" was now, needless to say, effectually

pricked. The *World*, in a witty summing-up of the situation, said: "Truth is stranger than fiction, but de Rougemont is stranger than both." THE WIDE WORLD, withdrawing its claim that the story was true, left its authenticity or otherwise to the judgment of its readers and continued the publication of the final instalments. These certainly proved, as we claimed, that "de Rougemont, if not a speaker of the truth, is at least a master of fiction who has had no equal in our language since Defoe."

"The Wide World" globes which were set adrift in the Atlantic at various points in order to test ocean currents. The photograph bears the autographs of the well-known people who launched the globes.

And how about the man himself during all this pother? He never lost his courage, never lost his winning smile, never showed any of the shame, confusion, or guilt that an impostor unmasked might have been expected to exhibit. "I have told the truth," he would say. "I may have been wrong in the dates; in the wilds a week seems like a month, a month like a year. Other things I have forgotten—I have been through so much, so much." He steadfastly denied, however, that he was Henry Louis Grin.

What *did* make him bitter was the fact that practically none of the well-known scientists and travellers who had at first enthusiastically endorsed his story came forward to say a word in his defence; they left him alone to bear the brunt. The world wrote him down fraud and humbug, laughed at the colossal "spoof," said he "must have been a clever old rogue to bring it off," and promptly turned to seek a new sensation.

After the *exposé* de Rougemont went back into the obscurity from which he had emerged so dramatically, and we lost sight of him, but in 1915 we heard that he had married a charming woman, who described her husband as "a delightful child of nature."

She believed implicitly in him, and said that he "would yet startle the world with the revelation of a great truth, and those who have thrown stones at him will live to see his name vindicated before the whole world."

And so our great "scoop" fell to pieces, leaving the unfortunate WIDE WORLD apparently a public laughing-stock. The scientific authorities and others who had vouched for the narrative discreetly withdrew to their official hiding-places and left us to face the storm alone. The story had certainly made the magazine famous, but now it came back like a boomerang, and looked almost like being the means of wrecking it. Nevertheless, we did not lose heart; we had published the tale in all good faith, after searching investigation; and those of us who had come into close contact with the gentle old wanderer were still convinced that he had actually been through most of the experiences he described, though he might have got mixed up as to dates, names, and other details.

It was a trying ordeal for the young magazine, but we were greatly cheered and helped by the unswerving loyalty of a very large body of readers. Thenceforth, however, our critics always had a gibe ready. "Oh! yes—THE WIDE WORLD," they would say disparagingly. "Wasn't that the paper that published that lying de Rougemont yarn?"

WORLD-WIDE CIRCULATION.

The years slipped by, the *exposé* became ancient history, and THE WIDE WORLD steadily consolidated its position, extended its circulation, and became a popular institution—the only magazine of its kind. Its circulation, by the way, soon became as world-wide as its title. Wherever English is spoken—in the busy cities of the Homeland and America, on lonely Australian stations, on prairie farms, on the South African veldt, in the sun-kissed islands of the South Seas and the teeming treaty ports of China—there regular readers

of THE WIDE WORLD were to be found. We discovered, too, that they were regular readers indeed; once a man fell under the peculiar spell of the magazine he became a patron for life, and even to-day we frequently receive letters from good friends who have been subscribers since Number One.

Many other "scoops" have come our way from time to time—not perhaps so sensational as the de Rougemont boom, but sufficiently outstanding to attract widespread attention—and before long our network of correspondents covered the whole world, and hardly an exploring expedition of note left the country without having previously fixed up an arrangement with us.

"THE WIDE WORLD" GLOBES.

In August, 1911, with the object of testing ocean currents and at the same time advertising THE WIDE WORLD, we embarked upon a novel scheme which immediately attracted widespread attention. This consisted of throwing into the Atlantic at intervals upon the westward voyage of the Cunarder *Campania* a dozen specially-made copper globes, bearing metal WIDE WORLD flags and brilliantly painted. Each globe contained a hermetically-sealed cartridge enclosing a notice in several languages asking the finder to report to our offices, when a reward of six guineas would be paid. The globes were launched by various well-known people on board the liner, including Madame Melba, and careful note was kept of the time and position. Madame Melba was so much interested that she offered a special further reward to the finder of the "Melba" globe, which had her name engraved on it.

It was not long before we received the first news of our scarlet-painted wanderers. No. 12 came ashore at Workington, Cumberland, being found by Mr. Samuel Hanna. This globe had travelled only a hundred miles—from South Stack, Holyhead—at an average rate of about fifteen miles a day.

A second was found in a cave at Toe Head, Co. Cork, by a fisherman named James Barry, who could hardly believe his luck when he found he was to receive six guineas for his unusual "catch."

On September 5th, No. 10 reached Montauk, Long Island, U.S.A., and No. 9—the last globe launched—turned up at Cape May City, New Jersey, on September 23rd. This globe was afloat for thirty-three days, but covered only a couple of hundred miles in an air-line, though it doubtless travelled much farther with the tides. Curiously enough, though thrown into the sea in the neighbourhood of No. 10, No. 9 set off south-west, while its companion drifted west-north-west.

A long interval elapsed before anything further was heard of the globes, and then, on February 23rd, 1912, No. 6 came ashore—at almost the identical spot, within a few yards, where No. 1 landed, although set adrift hundreds of miles distant.

No. 6 travelled some seven hundred miles almost in a straight line, taking a hundred and ninety-two days to accomplish the voyage. Not only did it reach the same haven as its predecessor, but by an extraordinary coincidence Mr. Barry, the finder of No 1, came within an ace of finding this sphere also! He was the "early bird," the first man to descend to the beach—on which he had kept a close watch since his former lucky find—but on this occasion he sat down on a rock for a moment to rest. While he was there Michael Attridge, a later arrival, passed on and picked up the six-guinea "worm" under his very nose! It is safe to say he will regret that costly little rest to the end of his days.

The next wanderer to be reported was No. 11, thrown overboard from the *Campania* by Miss Alice Russon, the well-known actress. This travelled two thousand three hundred miles, and finally reached land on March 9th in a little bay called Polagill, in County Donegal, Ireland. This globe evidently got into the current known as the North Atlantic Drift, and narrowly missed reaching Scotland.

No. 11 proved to be the last sphere we were to hear of. Where the other six got to is impossible to say; they may still be bobbing about somewhere in the ocean wastes, or they may be at the bottom of the ocean. It is difficult, however, to understand how they could sink, for they were most strongly made of hand-wrought copper, and were apparently capable of standing the roughest usage without serious damage. If one of them *should* turn up after all these years—and stranger things have happened—it will give us the greatest pleasure in the world to pay the reward originally offered.

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE.

One of the greatest points of difference between THE WIDE WORLD and its contemporaries is in the matter of contributors. The ordinary magazine relies upon professional writers for its material; THE WIDE WORLD draws its stories and articles at first hand from the people concerned—the adventure from the man who has experienced it, the exploration article from the traveller who made the journey. This is the secret of the actuality of WIDE WORLD narratives. The people who write them, in the vast majority of cases, have actually undergone the perils they tell of, seen the strange sights they describe, taken the photographs they furnish. This being the case, the reader will readily understand that the offices of the magazine have in course of time become a sort of Mecca for all those men and women who go out into the wild places of the earth, to the borders

of civilization and beyond. When a man contemplates an exploratory trip into a new country, he comes to us to discuss it. When a traveller returns with fresh material and photographs, he hastens to us to arrange for publication. And when some pioneer comes "Home" from the "edge of beyond," often the last piece of advice he gets from his chums is: "Don't forget to go and see THE WIDE WORLD about that adventure you had with the bear."

I have said enough, probably, to show you that our contributors are of no ordinary type. They are men and women who have lived the strenuous life, done things worth writing about, seen sights worth describing. Small wonder, then, that not a little of the romance and unconventionality of their lives creeps into their relations with ourselves, with the result that during twenty-five years' connection with the magazine—some twenty-odd of them spent in the editorial chair—I, too, have met with some curious experiences, such as do not commonly fall to the lot of magazine editors in their quiet sanctums in prosaic London.

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTORS.

Although THE WIDE WORLD does not go out for "names," unless the bearers of the names have done something well worth writing about, our list of contributors is a notable one, embracing the world's leading explorers, travellers, and big-game hunters, to say nothing of scores of men and women famous in other fields. It is impossible, in the space at my disposal, to give anything like a complete list of the well-known people who have written for the magazine during the twenty-five years of its existence, but it may be of interest to mention some of them as I skim through our files.

Explorers, needless to say, are well represented. Sir H. M. Stanley; Harry de Windt, who described for us his great journey from "Paris to New York Overland"; Dr. Nansen and Walter Wellman, Polar explorers; Herbert G. Ponting, who took those wonderful penguin photographs; the ill-fated Captain Boyd Alexander, who died at the hands of natives in the heart of the Africa he loved so well; H. St. J. Philby, who wrote for THE WIDE WORLD an exclusive account of his daring expedition "Across Unknown Arabia in Disguise"; Mrs. Rosita Forbes, who penetrated into the heart of the Sahara—these are just a few of the hundreds of well-known travellers whose names appear in our pages at the head of exclusive and specially-written articles.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's vivid "History of the Great Boer War" appeared month by month in our pages, as did Captain Dreyfus's story of his long martyrdom on Devil's Island, "Five Years of My Life."

Dr. W. T. Grenfell—the famous medical missionary, "Grenfell of Labrador"—has written several stories and articles for us, and other picturesque personalities are the late F. C. Selous, most gallant of sportsmen, and Bart Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy, by the way, went to Spain for us on a very interesting "stunt." Landing at Gibraltar with a revolver and a few pounds in his pocket, he set out to walk right across the country to the French frontier. The outcome of that trip was "A Tramp in Spain," which appeared in THE WIDE WORLD with great success.

Among mountain climbers—a goodly company—our contributors include Sir Martin Conway, Dr. and Mrs. Bullock Workman, those indefatigable Himalayan specialists, and Mr. George D. Abraham, the veteran climber-photographer, while the big-game hunters are altogether too numerous to mention.

It is interesting to note what a large number of people who have since become famous have figured in our pages—the ill-fated Alice and Claude Askew; the late Major H. Hesketh-Prichard, the creator of "Don Q."; Mary Roberts Rinehart; H. M. Vernon, author of "Mr. Wu"; and Ralph Stock, whose delightful "Cruise of the Dream-Ship" will be well remembered. Others—I take the names as they come, without any attempt at arranging them—are Beatrice Grimshaw, of South Sea fame; James Barr;

A crowd outside our offices in Southampton Street, Strand, looking at the first globes recovered.

Mrs. Alice Tweedie; H.H. the Ranee of Sarawak; and Lord Morris, Prime Minister of Newfoundland.

Our aim has always been to get hold of the man with a story to tell, whether he be duke or dustman, and our contributions, as a result, come literally from all sorts and conditions of men. That is why you find us publishing such "specialist" articles as "Round the World with a Billiard Cue," by Melbourne Inman, ex-billiards champion; and "The Adventures of a Steeplejack," by Will Larkins. We have also had contributions from such celebrities as Paul Cinquevalli, the juggler; Harry Houdini, the handcuff expert; and Carl Hertz and David Devant, the conjurers. These narratives concerned experiences met with in the course of the professional engagements of their authors; and very good stories they were.

Capt. Dreyfus, who wrote for us the story of his five years' martyrdom on Devil's Island.

Photo: Gerschel.

OUR CALLERS.

The great majority of our callers, as I have indicated, are most interesting people, bringing with them a breath of the great world beyond our shores, giving us, in their conversation, vivid little glimpses of the life of other lands. Soldiers and sailors, Government officials, missionaries, explorers, traders, hunters, prospectors—they come with their stories and their photographs from every clime. We get, too, men with freak propositions for "round the world" tours—men who, for a substantial consideration, are willing to engage in some quaint enterprise, such as walking across Europe in a paper suit, begging their way round the globe, trundling hoops across the United States, or something of that kind.

Still more extraordinary are the callers who try to sell us things—not articles and stories, which we are looking for, but such odd things as mines of fabulous richness, the clues to buried treasures, and the like. One earnest old miner, who had devoted a lifetime to the search for the yellow metal, tried hard to get us to finance him in a desperate effort to reach a wonderful bonanza he had discovered, at the risk of his life, in some terrible desert in Mexico. Another man had plans and documents galore, which he wished to sell quite cheaply, relating to the location of the eternal Cocos Island treasure. Some of these gentry, of course, are tricksters, though they miss the mark pretty badly in coming to us. Others, again, are undoubtedly genuine, but have simply come to the wrong market with their queer wares. One could tell countless stories on this subject did space permit.

THE WORKINGS OF FATE.

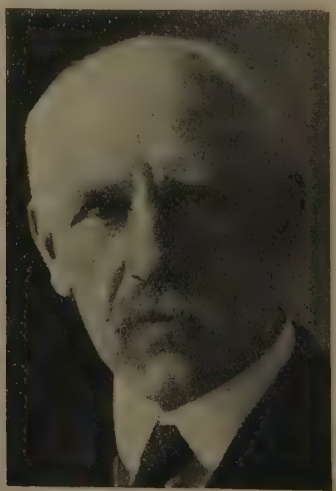
Though we believed we had finally finished with de Rougemont, discredited and well-nigh forgotten by the world, Fate decreed otherwise. On June 9th, 1921, there died in Kensington Infirmary, London,

Sir H. M. Stanley.

Photo: Elliott & Fry.

Mrs. Rosita Forbes.

Photo: Malcolm Arbuthnot.



Dr. Nansen.

Photo: Russell.

Mr. Harry de Windt.
Photo: Elliott & Fry.

Miss Beatrice Grimshaw.
Photo: Hoppé.

Mr. Bart Kennedy.
Photo: Elliott & Fry.

a man of eighty-five who had given the name of "Louis Redmond," but whom it was soon ascertained was poor old Louis de Rougemont. The account of his death, which appeared in the papers, was followed in some quarters by a renewal of the slurs upon his veracity, and we thought it only fitting, as a last tribute to the old man's memory, to publish an article, entitled "The Truth About Louis de Rougemont," in which we gave the lie to sundry idle stories and told for the first time the whole of the facts concerning how the narrative came to be written and the attacks upon it conducted. We described how well he came out of constant cross-examination by experts, bore testimony to his habitual scrupulous truthfulness in small matters that could be tested, and concluded by a reiteration of our belief that de Rougemont must actually have spent a lengthy period among the savage blacks. "Louis de Rougemont," I wrote, "will go down to posterity as one of the most remarkable and romantic figures that ever fluttered journalistic and scientific dovecotes—a simple, childlike man who suddenly came forth from the unknown to blaze like a meteor and sink again into the darkness of ridicule."

With that I thought I had written his epitaph, so far as THE WIDE WORLD was concerned—but Fate had yet another trick up her sleeve in connection with the matter.

DE ROUGEMONT'S VINDICATION.

In January, 1922, close on a quarter of a century after the publication of the original story, we were able to give to the world de Rougemont's triumphant vindication—surely one of the most unique and dramatic incidents in the history of journalism!

The diaries and photographs of an important cinematograph expedition which had just returned from the far North-West of Australia, following practically in the wanderer's footsteps, proved indisputably that, in many of his most fiercely-criticized stories, de Rougemont told nothing but the truth! A full account of these discoveries, with the corroborative pictures, appeared in our pages, and the film itself was shown at the Philharmonic Hall, London, and the leading provincial kinemas.

It was a thousand pities that this dramatic *denouement* to the old controversy came just too late to bring any personal satisfaction to the gentle old man who for so long endured the contempt of his fellows, but it gave us the greatest pleasure to publish the remarkable narrative that cleared his memory. Madame de Rougemont, his wife, whose prophecy of 1915 was thus so strikingly fulfilled, wrote to us: "I rejoice to know that THE WIDE WORLD, which first gave my husband's story to the world, is now able to vindicate his veracity and good name. I always felt that some day the truth would be discovered, and my only regret is that my husband did not live to see his vindication after so patiently enduring those long years of ridicule. Permit me to thank you for him as well as for myself."

And there, I think, we may leave these jottings from our past history. What shall I say of the future? Only this: That we go forward encouraged by the support of an ever-growing army of readers, determined, on our part, to spare no trouble or expense to make the magazine even more interesting and to justify our old-time boast that "There is no magazine in the wide world like THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE."

The Editor

Short Stories

I.—AN ADVENTURE WITH A MAD BUFFALO.

By EDWARD E. LONG, C.B.E.

Illustrated by ERNEST PRATER.

When an Indian buffalo goes mad he has distinct potentialities as a fighter, as this little story shows.

THIS is a story about a mad buffalo and myself; if the buffalo had not gone mad, there would have been no story. Before I tell you what this mad buffalo did to others, and would have done to me, let me first tell you something about the race, or tribe, to which he belonged.

He was—to accord him his proper scientific appellation—a specimen of *Bos* (*Bubalus*) *bubalis*—in other words, a typical Indian buffalo, an animal in appearance rather like a heavily-built ox, with sparsely-haired skin, large ears, long tufted tail, broad muzzle, and massive angulated horns. Restricted to India and Ceylon (though there is a buffalo in the Malay States akin to it) this buffalo lives in a wild state in grass jungles, near swamps, where the grass often reaches a height of twenty feet, so that he runs along regular covered tracks. Here he loves to wallow in the mud, which remains plastered to his sides and preserves him from the bites of gadflies. When brought to bay, the buffalo can acquit himself very creditably; with his powerful horns he is even a match for a tiger, and it is a noteworthy fact that no tiger will attack him unless impelled to do so by great hunger. The Indian driver of a herd of tame buffaloes does not hesitate to enter a tiger-frequented jungle, since his animals would probably make short work of any tiger that happened to come their way. Fights between buffaloes and tigers were recognized Indian sports in olden days, so that the buffalo is not to be regarded as the docile brute he seems to be in a state of captivity. He has potentialities, as I was destined to discover!

A strong beast, though he moves very leisurely, the buffalo is not too slow for the average Indian use, and accordingly he is to to be found all over India, engaged in various forms of draught work. It was with one of these domesticated, or semi-domesticated, buffaloes that I had my adventure.

I was living at the time in Northern India, in the city of Lucknow. The house I inhabited was a large one of pre-Mutiny type, and in the days before the English occupation it had been the residence of an Indian nobleman. Accordingly, as the fashion was then, it stood in spacious grounds, which abutted on those of a similar mansion, from which they were separated by a very solid brick wall about five feet in height.

I had just finished breakfast one morning when my Indian orderly rushed in and said, in a state of great agitation: "Sahib, there is a mad buffalo in the next compound! He has rushed thither from the public road through an open gate, having gored two policemen who tried to stop him!"

As he narrated this, my memory flashed back to my boyhood days in England when, intensely interested in all forms of sport and hunting, I had learned to throw the lasso. Indeed, I made myself quite expert in the use of it True, it was many years since I had practised the art, but something suddenly prompted me to endeavour to put my skill to the test now, in a really thrilling fashion. It was madness, I know; but we all have our occasional mad moments.

In a trice I had thought it all out and turned to my orderly. "All right, Mansab Ali," I told him, "I will go out and see what can be done."

He looked at me as though to say : " Why do you want to interfere in this dangerous business ? " for he was greatly attached to me, and when I left the room he followed me. I went straightway to a store-room where I knew there was a coil of stout rope, found it, and selected the length I needed for my purpose. As I picked it up and put it under my arm, Mansab Ali asked what I was going to do with it. I explained, and immediately he begged me to desist, following me to the dividing wall and still entreating me to refrain from such a dangerous attempt. I was not to be dissuaded, however, and when Mansab Ali realized this, he very courageously announced that wherever I went he would follow—and he did !

I had soon scaled the wall and perched myself astride it, and from this position I could see something of what was happening on the other side. I saw a small knot of men which changed its position every now and then, and some members of which were making a great hullabaloo. In the distance, among the trees (for the compound was thickly wooded) I espied an animal which every now and then made a rush in the direction of the spectators, much as a bull in the ring rushes at the *banderilleros* or *picadors*. I felt myself in the position of a spectator at a bull-fight, but I could not content myself with this. Briefly I told Mansab Ali that I was going to drop over into the other compound, and bade him stay where he was. Again he begged me not to go. I replied by jumping down into the " arena," and, looking back, I was secretly pleased to see that Mansab Ali had followed suit.

Making my way to the knot of spectators I inquired the latest news. Whilst this was being told me, the buffalo made a sudden rush towards us, scattering the gathering very effectively. I remember as though it were yesterday the amusing sight of the Assistant Commissioner of Police, who was in uniform with a sword, dashing wildly off to gain some shelter, with his sword clinking at his heels in the most alarming fashion and threatening to down him at every step he took !

Before the next rush occurred I was able to gather a few facts and see how the land lay. It appeared that the buffalo was being driven along one of the streets of the city, when it suddenly went mad and started off at a headlong pace, charging everything with which it came into contact. As Mansab Ali had said, it had gored two policemen, one very badly, and then it had rushed into this compound, the gates of which had been locked and from which it could not escape. A sporting rifle had been obtained, and the beast was to be shot as soon as he afforded a safe mark, but in this connection there was one great difficulty. The compound was surrounded by other houses, and there was serious danger of killing someone if a shot was fired which missed the buffalo.

In this dilemma I saw my opportunity. Gleefully I exhibited the coil of rope under my arm and informed the gathering that I intended to lasso the beast. " Having done so," said I very calmly to the man with the rifle, " you can then despatch it." I believe they all thought it was a joke, but I very soon undeceived them, for, making ready my running noose, and testing it, I advanced cautiously in the direction of the buffalo, the faithful Mansab Ali not many yards behind me.

The buffalo, after the last rush, had occupied himself with plunging his head into a small bamboo thicket and tearing up the young plants with his horns. I got near enough to him to observe the masses of red foam which were being blown from his mouth and nostrils ; then he perceived me. I had just time to get the rope ready as he dashed at me, in a bee-line. I waited until he was about thirty yards off, and then whirled the lasso over his head. As though divining my intention, the brute swerved his great frame most dexterously, caught the rope on the tip of one horn, and tossed it contemptuously aside. In another second he was on me, and like a *matador* in a Spanish bull-fight, I just managed to hop aside in time ! After this rush he went back to the rope, dug his horns into the ground beside it, tossed the noose into the air, and then turned and charged off in another direction.

Again I made an essay on foot, though this time I was urged by the others present not to do so, while Mansab Ali implored me to desist. He had been not far from me during the first attempt and narrowly avoided the maddened animal. This time also I failed by as narrow a margin as before. I suppose I was rusty, and in any case I had never before tried to lasso a large animal, and especially one in a mad state as it was charging me ! I felt very annoyed, and in this frame of mind an idea suddenly occurred to me. I had noticed that after his rushes, the buffalo usually retired to the neighbourhood of a large *neem* tree, with low-spreading boughs, and I argued that if I could run to this tree, swing myself up into it from one of the boughs, and then have the rope flung to me, I might be able to lasso the buffalo from the tree in comparative safety.

I outlined my plan to the man with the rifle, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, and to Mansab Ali, who asked to be allowed to throw me the rope. Then, selecting a favourable opportunity, as I thought, I raced to the tree, jumped up, flung my arms around a large bough, and swung myself into it. As I did so the buffalo made a violent rush in my direction, and those who were looking on held their breath as they saw the

"I had just time to get the rope ready as he dashed at me."

buffalo's horns actually skim, as it were, a certain portion of my anatomy!

Once safely established in the tree, it was easy work for me to catch the rope, fasten one end round the trunk, make my way along a big low-lying branch near which the buffalo was standing, and fling the noose over his head. I had an anxious moment, it is true, to avoid being caught by the rope, when, after it was fast about the buffalo's neck, he tried to rush round the tree. This safely negotiated, I had another thrill when, as I was standing on the bough only a few feet above the head of the buffalo, the sportsman with the rifle —a double-barrelled "Express"—in his excitement pulled both triggers at once, nearly burst the gun, and almost shot me instead of the buffalo!

Another second and I had hopped down and was beside the brute who had caused all the trouble; and a big beast he was. I was pleased to think I had got him eventually, but I should have been more pleased if I could have "roped" him on the run, in true cowboy fashion. Looking back now, I think it was rather hard on me that the man who shot the buffalo got its horns, whilst as for me—I only got into the papers!

II.—JIMMY'S REFORMATION.

By CHARLES LAYNG.

Eight-year-old Jimmy Boncelek used to be the terror of his village, the leader in every sort of mischief. Now, however, he has completely changed. This little story explains why.

ANY mischief brewing among the boys of Stigler, Oklahoma, U.S.A., could usually be traced to eight-year-old Jimmy Boncelek, for he was the scapegrace of the community. There was nothing really bad about him; he was just adventurous to the last degree. Now, however, he has become one of the best-behaved boys in town, as a result of a series of some of the most remarkable adventures that have ever happened to a child of his age.

Last April Jimmy decided that the dull grind of school ought to be spiced with a little variety, so he ran away from home and associated himself with a gang of "hoboes," or tramps, as a "gay-cat," which means, in the *argot* of the "knights of the road," a boy whose chief duty is to beg for these shiftless wanderers.

For perhaps two weeks, according to Jimmy's story, as told subsequently, he moved from place to place in company with the gang, pitching camp finally in a wild unsettled locality known as Brushy Mountain. After two days there, Jimmy awoke one morning to find that his gang had moved on during the night and left him alone. This disturbed Jimmy not at all, for they had left behind some odds and ends of food, sufficient for a breakfast of "mulligan," a messy stew made by throwing bits of bread, scraps of meat and raw vegetables into a can of hot water and cooking the whole over a camp-fire.

Jimmy Boncelek.

While engaged in preparing this dish Jimmy was startled by the sudden appearance of a short powerful negro and a gigantic negress, who pushed the boy aside and attacked the "mulligan" voraciously.

Suddenly a white man appeared in the clearing and, with rifle levelled at the negro, shouted :—

"I've got you. Hands up!"

Like a flash, the negro seized Jimmy and, holding him by the shoulders, swung him between his would-be captor and himself.

"You cain't shoot de boy, boss," he said, as he backed slowly away. The white man hesitated, and poor Jimmy yelled lustily, for the business end of a rifle looked terribly big at that close range. Then the white man shouted, and a chorus of yells answered him, followed by a crashing of bushes. The negroes had by this time reached the edge of the clearing and, still carrying Jimmy, they dodged and ducked among the thickets, making their way up the side of the mountain. Gradually, by consummate woodcraft, they shook off their pursuers and reached the shelter of a cave, well hidden by a screen of blackberry bushes across its entrance.

These negroes, it transpired later, were man and wife, and fugitives from justice. They had been illicitly distilling whisky at their farm at the foot of the mountain, and when the deputy sheriff came to arrest the man and actually had him handcuffed, his wife crept upon the deputy unseen and felled him with a hoe. Thereupon, taking the key from the unconscious sheriff's pocket, she released her husband from the handcuffs. The precious pair then beat the deputy to death with clubs and fled. A posse, consisting of most of the able-bodied men of the countryside, was immediately formed to pursue the murderers, and the man-hunt was soon in full swing. The negro, however, had been a scout with the United States Army in the Philippines, and knew the surrounding country perfectly. There was also an additional factor that mitigated against his prompt capture. When a negro kills a white man in this section of the South-west, he knows that immediate and summary justice will be meted out to him. He knows he is doomed to death, and some queer mental twist seems to spur him on to kill

as many white men as possible before he himself is shot down. It is a peculiar mental phenomenon somewhat similar to the "running amuck" of the Malay, or the *hermantado* of the Filipino. In all three cases, the unfortunate man becomes crazed with the murder-lust.

The derailed train that nearly cost Jimmy his life.

It was into the hands of two such fiends as this that poor little Jimmy had fallen. They had been hiding out for over two weeks, practically surrounded, and with no food other than an occasional rabbit, killed with a stone and eaten raw.

In the cave, the pair discussed the fate of Jimmy. The man was for killing him at once, but the woman, probably through some faint gleam of mother-love, argued that if permitted to live he might at least act as a hostage to save them from the fury of the mob. Desperate from hunger, the man's plan was to rush his pursuers, unarmed as he was, and try to kill one or more of them before he himself was shot down. The woman, however, finally evolved a plan which they decided to carry out.

That night, she made her way to a lone farmhouse and told the startled housewife that if she and her husband were guaranteed safety from the mob, they would surrender to the sheriff and his deputies, otherwise the boy would be killed. It was arranged that a signal, in the form of a sheet, was to be displayed at the window of the farmhouse if the sheriff accepted this proposition.

About noon the signal duly appeared, and in a pitiable condition the two fugitives went down to the farmhouse, taking Jimmy with them. Here they surrendered to the sheriff, who promptly spirited them away to jail in another county, where they would be safe from lynch law.

Jimmy stayed at the farmhouse just long enough to gorge himself to repletion; then he slipped quietly away, his taste for adventure not yet satisfied. He walked to a railroad water-tank and hid until a passenger train stopped for water. Then, very cautiously, he climbed aboard the "blind baggage"—between the baggage car and the passenger coach. The train started and, despite his precarious perch, Jimmy soon fell asleep to the clicking of the rails. He awoke with a start to find the world crashing and roaring about him. Instinctively he seized a hand-hold; then all went black before his eyes.

When he recovered consciousness, he discovered that the train had been derailed and he was wedged in a small space between two cars. Had he been bigger he would most certainly have been crushed. As it was, struggle as he would, he could not free himself. Then, to his horror, he found that the side of the car was slowly moving towards him as the big vehicle settled down in the soft earth. He shouted and screamed at the top of his voice, and answering shouts came from outside. Presently a lantern flashed in his face.

"Good heavens!" shouted a man, "there's a boy caught between these two cars."

His cry brought others running. They saw the child's terrible predicament. Slowly, inexorably, he was being crushed to death as the cars sank. Willing hands tried to push the car away or stop its settling, but the weight was too great. Swearing and praying alternately in their helplessness, the hard-bitten railroad men and ranchers brushed the tears from their eyes as they struggled furiously, hopelessly, to save the boy's life.

Then a glad cry went up—"The wrecker has come!" The wrecking crane had indeed arrived, and not a moment too soon. Working frantically, the wrecking crew ran chains round the huge car, and then the derrick slowly but surely lifted it away from the form of the now unconscious Jimmy.

Jimmy "came to" in the hospital hours later to find his weeping mother by his side. Fortunately, he had escaped with no greater injury than a broken wrist and painful bruises.

"Believe me," said he, "I'm cured. No more adventures for me!"

The COUGHLIN KIDNAPPING CASE

by Katherine Mayo

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM HALL

The story of what is surely the most amazing man-hunt in the history of the American police. The thirteen-months-old baby of Mr. and Mrs. Coughlin was stolen from his nursery at night, and thereafter every kidnapper and blackmailer in the States, apparently, wrote to the distracted parents offering to restore the child on payment of heavy ransom. The police and private inquiry agents appeared to make no headway; they even suspected the anguished young mother of having herself made away with her baby! Finally the aid of the famous Pennsylvania State Police—a semi-military body resembling the North-West Mounted Police of Canada—was solicited. The whole force concentrated its energies on elucidating the mystery, and things began to happen right away. We have never published a more thrilling narrative; at times the suspense grows positively painful. One sees the clever, patient spade-work of the investigators and their lightning-like strokes, while, in the background, there is the agony of the bereaved mother, yearning for her baby, and the skulking figure of the stony-hearted kidnapper, mysterious and elusive to the last. "To the best of my knowledge and belief," writes the Authoress, "the story is exactly true. I think that the Superintendent of the State Police would also say that it is accurate. All names of persons and places are the actual names in the case, and all dates are correct."

I.

MR. GEORGE H. COUGHLIN, of Norristown, Pennsylvania, was a young business man of a sort that America likes to claim—well-bred, well-plucked, kindly, honourable, and self-possessed. Mrs. Coughlin, his young wife, was of another good American type—wholesome, sturdy, candid, clear-eyed, cheerful, courageous. The Coughlins were in modest circumstances, far from rich, and lived like the majority of reasonably prosperous young couples in suburbs and smaller towns.

Norristown was their business centre and their winter home, but when summer drew on they followed the example of many of their friends and moved a few miles away into one of a string of cottages on an airy ridge. There an unpretentious country club gave the several little households their centre of life, and a convenient tram made good any lack of private cars. The Coughlins' cottage, just big enough for their little household, was the sort of comfortable, inexpensive thing that is built by the thousand in "homestead parks" all over the country.

By the first of June, 1920, the Coughlins had already settled into that ridge cottage for the summer, and their three boys, from the eight-year-old eldest to Baby Blakeley, aged thirteen months, were showing the effect of the high, bright air. Little Blakeley, in fact, having been ill with a severe cold, was now so much improved that on the evening of June 1st his parents joined a neighbouring card party.

Returning near midnight, the two went together to visit the children's rooms, lingering last and longest by the baby, to admire his rosy beauty and rejoice in his returning health. His nursery, which was his alone, opened out of the parents' chamber, and, as his mother left him, she softly closed the door between, lest the draught from the open window beyond his crib proved too strong.

At about two o'clock that night—very suddenly and with that immediate clearness that implies a definite cause—the young mother awakened from a sound, calm sleep.

"What is it?" she thought, listening with arrested breath.

But the house was steeped in stillness, and the great white moonlight flooded the outer silence with peace.

"Why did God call me?"

Somehow those very words seemed uttered in her brain. Even then she marvelled at them because such phrases, such thoughts, had never been her vein.

"Why did God call me?"

Awhile she sat upright by her sleeping husband's side, clasping her knees, looking through the eyes of the moon upon a wonderful, beautiful, silent world. Gradually her senses drowsed. She sank back on her pillow and slept again.

Once more, in a flash, something recalled her. This time a baby's cry, just a tiny, broken fragment of a wail—and close thereafter another sound, a sort of light, small creak, a sound that a baby could not make.

Already she had half-risen, but that small creak—— Her heart turned cold.

"George!" she spoke clearly. "George! Please see what's wrong with baby." Thinking, you see, that the voice and words would frighten a burglar away before anyone could reach the nursery.

Mr. Coughlin sprang up and, opening the nursery door, stood on the threshold for an appreciable instant. Then he called back:—

"Do you think nurse could have taken him?"

"You don't mean he's gone!" she cried, and ran to the crib.

The blankets lay as she had left them, with the cover tucked smoothly around. Nothing had changed form or place. The under-sheet still held the impress of the little head, but the baby was not there. So much the moon showed.

They flashed on the lights. Just an empty room. They flew to the other children, to the nurse—in vain. Then down the stairs and out on the lawn. A ladder stood at the nursery window!

Mr. Coughlin plunged into the shrubbery, searching, while the wife rushed to the telephone to call the city police. All night, aided by their neighbours, they hunted the countryside—fruitlessly.

Meantime the police and the resources of a great detective agency had been called to aid. Next morning the house was full of strange men, stranger theories, and questions, out of which, like a ghost out of chaos, presently emerged a most hideous thought.

A CRUEL SUSPICION.

Someone, somehow, evolved the notion that the young mother herself had destroyed her child! And the notion caught! They found it difficult to believe, you see, that a family without either wealth or enemies—and it was at once obvious that the Coughlins had neither—could be the victims of such a crime. Therefore they fixed upon an idea to them more conceivable.

"She is so calm!" they said. And all that evening two agents sat in the house racking the poor soul with questions, trying to wear her down, to bluff and batter her into confession.

"She is too calm!" they said, having no place in their scheme of things for a woman at once too courageous, too proud, and too well-bred to exhibit personal suffering.

"If Mrs. Coughlin is in on this, hanging is too good for her," remarked Inspector X—— in her presence.

The fantasy of the words actually forced from her a smile.

"She certainly acts very peculiarly," they observed, noticing the smile, and took a new hold on their vision.

No need to go into the various mare's-nests that their theory enabled them to discover—the light-witted relative of a household servant who bore strange testimony as to the child's coming into the world, the missing birth registration, the hunt through the poor woman's girlhood home for the wherewithal to convict her out of her past. No need to go into the mare's-nests, for not one of them produced a single result save those that all had in common.

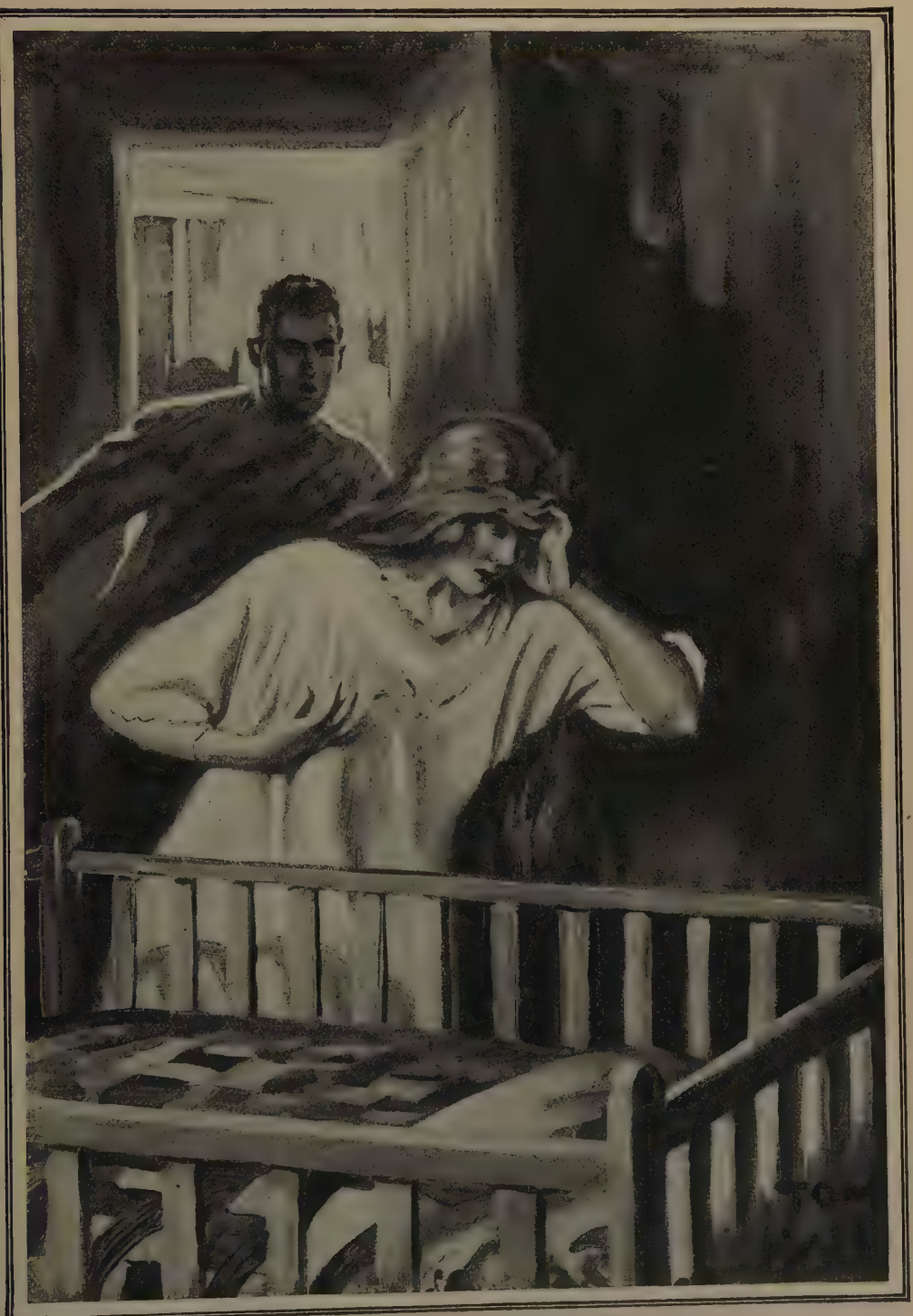
First: They occupied priceless time with useless inquiries.

Second: Through immediate leakage to the press, they brought down upon an innocent family a mass of evil report that would have been almost murderous had not the cup of anxiety and grief brimmed already too full to receive another drop.

Meantime, in the few days directly following the child's disappearance, letters began to pour through the Coughlins' mail. One of the first read thus:—

> We got your boy and very nice looking he is he will get the best care from my sis, for the next three weeks, but after that, if we don't get what we ask you better forget all about him because he will be put in the dark cell that is ten feet underground it will smell a little strong because one has been there for over two years and one nine months. . . . We do not kill nobody but we leave them starve in this cell the price is $6,000 . . . if you are going to pay just put this in the Norristown (paper) that you are willing to pay $6,000 reward for the return of your boy. . . . 10 hours after we get the money a messenger will take your son back to you but remember . . . don't put no cop after us . . . these coppes are no good but trim you of your money they never will find your son you can try them but don't let the three weeks go by.

Other letters from different sources followed fast, carrying suggestions of what to do; advice as to how to do it; stories of babies answering to the description of little Blakeley seen in suspicious circumstances here and there; recitals of dreams; above all demands for ransom, with threats of murder in many forms. The enormous publicity thrust upon the case, advertising its minutiæ, as the days passed, to the remotest corners of the country, had lavished upon



"'You don't mean he's gone!' she cried, and ran to the crib."

every criminal brain the stimulation and the wherewithal to work.

Out of the tangled mass the unhappy parents knew no way to separate true from false. Of the multitude professing to hold the child perhaps all lied. Conversely, if any of the stories really concerned him it could be but one out of the entire collection. Which one ?

The various agents of the various agencies on the job inspired but little hope of help, partly for the reason that their minds seemed occupied with a preconception of Mrs. Coughlin's guilt, partly, as it seemed, because of a rivalry tending to mutual frustration rather than to constructive work. Further, no sooner did any plan near ripeness for execution than by some means or other the whole thing was blazoned in print, the whole scheme defeated in advance, and the unfortunate family became the object of what amounted to a real persecution by news-hunters.

Men with cameras kept steady guard at their gate by day. If they attempted escape through some side passage, if they reached a car waiting at a distance, other cars filled with men with notebooks emerged from the dust and stuck to their rear wheels. If, under cover of darkness, they crept away to a neighbour's for a conference behind drawn blinds, their trail was quickly discovered, and eavesdroppers listened beneath the windows, stealing close to the house.

Even the small hours brought no peace, for then the news-stalkers, mounting the embankment by the gate, shot automobile headlight rays into the bedroom window. Every night of her life, just at two o'clock, the hour that the baby went, the poor mother started awake from some horrible dream into full consciousness that the worst of nightmares might scarcely be worse than the truth—to find the sympathy of the world expressed in the glare of the sharp, white searchlight focused upon her bed !

" If you will only tell those men that they are going to make me lose my mind," she said once.

For the rest, her whole thought was for her baby—her baby—her baby—to find her little baby that was gone.

She had no time for hysterics, no time, no awareness, no sorrow for herself. She behaved like her husband, like a gentleman, in fact. So they called her conduct damning, and hunted the harder to prove her crime.

Meantime, out of the ever-increasing influx of anonymous letters from persons alleging possession and demanding ransom for the child one thread began to stand out, the thread first introduced by the letter already quoted.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS.

A second letter, indubitably from the same source, had dictated the place and manner in which the ransom was to be delivered and the date. To this Mr. Coughlin had replied by a newspaper advertisement asking proof of possession, for a photograph of the child, or for a bit of his dress.

Why did you not bring the $6,000 where you were told to bring it ? (ran the answer, posted in Norristown itself). My price will now be $12,000 in place of $6,000. . . . You ask for proof. I can give you all the proof you want ; the room where I got the boy has three doors, one Roking chair was in the middle of the floor between the window and the crib. I had to move it a little to get by. A table or a dresser is on the left near the window as I went in, with a woman's workbasket on top . . . the baby's bed-covering was turned down on the side that face a door which lead in to the house. The ladder has got two hook standing up and I put the ladder against the flower box that was on the ground, and if you inquire to some of the men that work on that new building where I took the ladder they also miss an overcoat which I used to wrap the boy in. . . . You can't get the clothing . . . because I destroyed them myself the same night as I got the boy because I was afraid of some mark on it. In regard to a photograph its out of the question. I cant take no photo and I am not going to hire an outsider to do it ; not now because his photo is in every paper. It would be to walk right in the trap. . . . I only hope that Mr. Blakeley will keep well because if he ever get sick a Doctor never will be allowed to see him. . . . We feed him on milk and eggs and a little bread all he want.

The description of the baby's room and all the circumstances detailed exactly fitted the facts. Further details given in letters immediately following showed equal accuracy and no small cleverness ; and the writer, following the case as serialized in the press, gave running comment thereon, as :—

I am not like those cranks that wrote you from Cleveland or Savanna. They are just trying to Blackmail you, but you will not get the boy from them, and they cant tell you if the coppers are on the right trail or not because they dont know where the boy is themself.

And again :—

If you want to find out who is the real kidnapper of Mr. Blakeley . . . just put an advertise in the evening paper that your boy has been found and you got him home once more and that all the letters you received demanding ransom was from cranks trying to get ransom for a boy they did not have, and then quit to advertise for your boy for a few days and you will see that all those persons will stop writing to you for money thinking that you got your boy back. Everybody will believe it except you, your wife and the one that got the boy—that's me. Now you can . . . have the child back any time you want to but not before I get the money. It used to be $6,000 but when I saw in the paper that you was going to deal with a man which didn't had the boy and was asking for $20,000 ransom it made me raise my price to $12,000.

Then, casually :—

Say, Mr. George, soon as I saw your wife's photo in the Eve. Bulletin this afternoon I came right home and show it to the boy. He seem to recognize her because he just kept looking at her photo for quite awhile and then smile and put the photo over his face just like as if he was kissing her.

How could father or mother bear that mental picture? How could they hesitate, or weigh any cost against the merest chance of its being true? Remember that scores on scores of other letters, each claiming knowledge, and many claiming possession of the boy, poured into the Coughlin house by every mail, while vocal counterparts besieged them by telephone every hour of the clock. And the Coughlins were not wealthy folk. They had not the wherewithal to shoot a random bolt and, missing, shoot again.

"Handle the affair yourself," wrote man after man who had undergone, in the abduction of his child, a similar torment.

"Don't deal with the police," urged others who, though strangers, came in honest sympathy to visit the distraught parents. "If you can once convince yourself that any given man has your child, play it straight with him—an even exchange." And: "Place your money and take your chance; it's the only chance there is."

No one would have supposed that the whole nation afforded so many child-kidnapping histories as now were rehearsed. Even relatives of the long-lost Charlie Ross expressed, in a spirit of helpfulness, the belief that had the family of their missing boy dealt with his abductors direct, he would have been restored to his home.

Meantime, Mr. Coughlin and his wife, separately, in order to spread their efforts and to save priceless time, sometimes accompanied by police, sometimes alone, had already travelled in every direction into many States, to all sorts and conditions of places upon visits to mysterious babies who, their informants believed, might be little Blakeley. Inexpressibly nerve-racking had the experience proved, inexpressibly hideous, utterly blank. Moreover, so rapidly did calls and claims accumulate that it was mechanically impossible for them, work as they would, to begin to cover the ground; and they faced in despair the fact that they had not the means to pay to have it done.

Major Lynn G. Adams, now Superintendent of the Pennsylvania State Police. At the time of this story he was Captain of "A" Troop.

Yet now, through the whirling clouds of doubt, one original potentiality seemed strengthening in outline, one potentiality growing, forcing their hand. This was the writer of the letter just quoted.

"THE CRANK."

Particularly because of his accurate description of the baby's room he haunted the parents' minds. Mr. Coughlin parleyed with him, using the advertising columns of a newspaper, while "The Crank," as he called himself, responded by telephone or by mail. At length, fourteen horrible days after little Blakeley's disappearance, seeing no ray of light or progress anywhere, the unhappy father agreed to accede to his persecutor's demand to place $12,000 in currency in a certain spot in a manner minutely specified. This thing, for fear of leakage, he proceeded to do without taking into his confidence any of the various police agents on the job.

The money, "The Crank" decreed, was to be left at a certain hour on the night of June 14th, at an exactly-indicated place behind the trolley railway station near Swedeland, a steel town close to Norristown.

The money was to be left in a hand-bag, and with it a blanket in which the baby would be wrapped on his return in the small hours of the same night. The father was particularly warned not to remain in the vicinity, nor to bring any sort of guard or police into the matter.

All these things Mr. Coughlin did, making, to raise the sum demanded, sacrifices that for any lesser reason he could but ill afford. He placed $12,000 in currency in the spot directed, parcelled in a hand-bag in the manner prescribed. He "played square" to a T, and waited for the answering play that his many advisers had so confidently forecast.

The money duly disappeared, but in vain did he look for the return of the baby. In vain. Nothing happened, except that the various detectives and police people who had been working on the case—some of them doing some very sound investigating—naturally felt nettled when they learned through the press that so important a step as the planting of the money had taken place without their knowledge.

"How can we work unless we have your confidence and know how you move? If such a thing was to be done at all, doing it in that way threw away our best chance of catching the kidnappers," they protested.

"I don't care a thing on earth what becomes of the kidnapper," the distracted father retorted. "*We want our boy.* Time is flying. What has been accomplished by *your* means?"

Nothing good, indeed, appeared to have been accomplished by anyone. Money, found with difficulty, had been thrown away. Time, vastly more precious than money, had been spent in vain. And through it all, as the days, the hours, and the moments passed, ran the thought of the precious, tender baby life so much further spent, just so much further weakened and abused in the hands of a ruffianly criminal. Nothing, it seemed, had been accomplished, nothing at all; and the father's wild bolt shot into the dark had proved as profitless as all the rest.

Meanwhile, the press, still serializing, printed a statement attributed to a local policeman to the effect that he had himself been in the vicinity of the Swedeland Station late on the night in question; that he had seen there nothing of Mr. Coughlin or anyone else, and that he did not, in fact, believe that the alleged incident of the money-planting had ever happened! And now, at last, in saturnine comment upon this view, came a word from "The Crank" himself. That same local policeman, he affirmed, spoke truth indeed when he said he had seen no one about the Swedeland Station. Had it been otherwise—had he, for example, observed one who sat comfortably watching *him* from the top of a heap of coal close by—he would probably have modified his course.

I took him to be somebody you put there to watch me when I was going to get the money (wrote "The Crank" to Mr. Coughlin, righteously stigmatizing as a "crook and a liar" this latest figure on the scene). I saw you go inside of the station once and twice from your automobile to where you left the bag. He was behind a railroad car right across from the Station, watching you all the time; after you were gone he went over in back of the station and I saw him come out with the bag and blanket . . . so I got away as quickly as I could and went to join my chauffeur that was waiting.

After their discarding of private detective agencies, after their fruitless independent effort at self-help, after the consequent loss of interest on the part of some of the police powers then at work, the Coughlins almost despaired, knowing no further resource. Almost despaired, for to despair in fact while yet their boy might be alive would be unthinkable, and hope without action meant madness.

Yet—what, *what* could they do?

It was just at that point that Mr. Jack Larzolere, the Coughlins' friend and attorney, met Mr. William Coulter, a well-known man with a head full of brains and a heart full of red-blooded human sympathy.

"Why in the name of reason," said Mr. Coulter, "don't those unhappy people cut straight through their trouble and go to the State Police, as they should have done in the first place?"

"State Police?" asked Mr. Larzolere, with an inclusive lift in his accent.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Coulter. "To think there could be a man in Pennsylvania that didn't *know!*"

That very afternoon, June 15th, Mr. Coulter led Mr. Larzolere and Mr. Coughlin, two men pleading as for life itself, into the headquarters of the Department of State Police in Harrisburg.

Now remember, the case, pre-eminently one which should have been taken up quickly, was over two weeks old. The trail had been crossed and double-crossed uncounted times by all the investigators. Most of the men originally working on the job had lost heart or for one reason or another had quit entirely. The whole affair was tangled, messed, smudged out in a thick, black fog, behind which the facts had probably slid far beyond hope of capture. In a word, it looked bad.

Furthermore, the Pennsylvania State Police Force, as usual, had its hands full ten times over. Day by day the State was heaping on it far more work than it could handle, for all its sleepless endeavour. Therefore, whether it would or not it must choose its cases, picking the most important, leaving lesser needs for later time, for other hands, or for sincerely regretted inaction. The Coughlin affair, distressing though it was, might well seem one to be crowded out by the hundreds of others more inevitably

"Walking straight up to the stranger, she looked him in the face. 'Do *you* think I killed my baby?'"

pressing. Fairly, squarely, it was "up to" the superintendent, and no man either would or could question his decision.

THE STATE POLICE TAKE CHARGE.

Major Adams, tall, spare, lithe as a cat, black-eyed, firm-mouthed, soldierly, leaning forward in his chair behind the desk in his private office, listened to the tale in his own peculiar way, listened like a flame-devouring oil, silently and with finality assimilating every bit of it. Swiftly the case took shape in his mind, and beside it the *pros* and *cons* to the course before him. On the one hand stood the incontestable truth that his hands were over-full already. On the other, two factors :—

First, that "The Crank" was confoundedly clever, clever enough to pique and personally interest even the Major himself, which meant no little. "It looks as though he *couldn't* be caught, and I don't like to have a man like that around," he ruminated.

Second, that Adams had two little chicks of his own at home, and it's all very well to say that that shouldn't make any difference.

It was two hours after midnight, two o'clock on the morning of June 16th, when Adams, covered with the dust of rapid travel, walked into the Coughlins' sitting-room.

Mrs. Coughlin came forward to meet him. Her young face was white and drawn; her hair, that two weeks earlier had been glossy brown, was shot with streaks of grey, but her carriage showed firm and upright, and something that shone around and through her made clear the truth that thought of self had no part or place in her mind; that she dwelt on no suffering, no self-pity, or any kind of personal claim or fear.

Walking straight up to the stranger, she looked him full in the face, her own frank blue eyes stripping naked the question :—

"Do *you* think I killed my baby?"

Adams returned her look in kind. Then, gently, he took her hand.

"Madam, when nothing else is left to me, then and not till then, will I think that thing of a mother."

In a climax of suspense the woman had awaited his answer, the answer to her desperate touchstone. Now, suddenly, her whole body seemed to relax.

"Thank God!" she murmured, and after, "*Now* we shall have light. I knew there must be somewhere intelligence to help us!"

"I shall make all my plans known to you and your husband," said the Major, "and I shall expect from you both absolute openness and co-operation while this case is in my hands."

With Adams had come that night one of his troop commanders, Gearhart, Captain of "C" Troop, a splendid type of alert young soldier, with a mind as clear and clean as his spirit was high, and trained to a fine edge by intensive secret service experience in the Force. To Gearhart the Major had resolved to entrust the conduct of this case.

Together the two officers reviewed the work that had been done, the steps that had been taken. The ground, they found, had been fairly well covered, so well covered or red-herringed, in fact, as to leave but uninviting points of departure for new workers. Still, as the affair remained as much of a mystery as it had been on the day of its origin, plainly their work lay ahead of them, and they saw the trend of the initial steps.

These, as they reckoned, comprised two sections of activity. First, a mass of "clue-sifting" to be done in many directions. Second, the incarceration of Captain Samuel W. Gearhart, hidden and *incognito*, somewhere in Norristown for a wholly indefinite period.

For the execution of the incarceration, Mr. Jack Larzolere himself promptly produced a small back room in the second storey of an office building in the centre of the town. That room's one window facing west, the only direction from which the wind never blew, received the full glare of the hot sun. Its one door must never stand open. Two hard, wooden chairs and one cot comprised the furnishings; and one high, limp, weakly sputtering gas-jet, which in any case could be but little used for fear of exciting notice, provided the only light by night. Flies found the unscreened window with unfailing acumen and brought the eager mosquito in their train. In a word, that room was the living picture of a place to stay out of; and for reasons sufficient to rule no improvements could be made.

CAPTAIN GEARHART'S VIGIL.

Now just here comes one of the few disadvantages of telling an absolutely true story. Captain Gearhart, relieved by Corporal Snodgrass only when some acute development inexorably ordered his presence elsewhere, stayed inside that wretched little room, night and day alike, watching, working, without a glimpse of life or a breath of outer air, from June 18th to July 31st. Yet what he did in that same place and time may not be told; not one word of it, for reasons that concern the weal of all of us. We may one day need it repeated.

You must just take the assurance, however, that those forty-four days of hot-box confinement were well and wisely spent, knowing only that from three to seven State police officers steadily attached in various plain-clothes guises, flew in and out the while like busy carrier-pigeons, dispatched by Gearhart on various enterprises.

Meantime, other activities had instantly begun. For a start, "C" Troop of the State Police, in whose territory Norristown lies, gave their country in a three-mile radius around the Coughlins' house such a scientific fine-tooth-combing as nothing could escape. In this the Norristown Boy Scouts, working under troopers' directions, very considerably aided; but the search, alas, developed no clue.

At the same time began a careful sifting of the mass of letters, signed or anonymous, that daily and hourly continued to inundate the Coughlin mail. Some of them were simply malicious; more bore open fraud on their faces; more still showed patently empty and vain. But of the residue, containing some possible shadow of meat, however slight, not one was discarded without investigation, for too much lay at stake.

The number of babies reported to the Coughlins as having been left "to board" by unknown persons—babies nameless, naked, and without clothes, without any sort of belongings—literally reached into the hundreds. One man, himself obviously honest, related that, having lately admired a baby in the arms of an unknown woman fellow-passenger by rail, she had suddenly asked him:—

"Would you like to have it?"

"Yes," answered the man, naturally thinking the question hypothetical.

Whereupon, "Take it," she said, and, depositing the child in his arms, flashed out of sight in the crowd on the platform!

River-boat stewardesses, station porters, night-watchmen, sent in information of suspicious circumstances observed. Garage men, hotel proprietors, citizens of every class and calling, reported matters whose value personal investigation alone could prove. By June 17th, the day after the State Police took over the case, the Force throughout all the length and breadth of the State was deep in these investigations. Where before the Coughlins themselves had been dragged hither and thither in body and in mind by each new scent, now State troopers, trained, keen and silent, searched out the ground in their stead, summoning the parents only when a baby was discovered so closely conforming to baby Blakeley's description that a parent alone could determine the truth.

The word of the traveller by rail, for example, into whose arms a child had been so unexpectedly dropped, led Corporal Haines over the border of Maryland to a little house in a big black swamp twenty-three miles from anywhere at all. Here, said the traveller, he had deposited his embarrassment, for here lived the only person in all his ken who had expressed a desire for a child. Corporal Haines, travelling fast, reached the spot after midnight.

Aroused from the depths of sleep, almost in hysterics for pitiful fear of losing her treasure, the woman of the house in the marsh brought the child forth in her arms. She freely admitted the truth of the traveller's tale, and the baby, a fine, bright boy, was just little Blakeley's size and build. But—he had red hair!

At the very same small hour in open country near Darby, Pennsylvania, Captain Price of the Force, on the word of a huckster concerning a certain gipsy outfit, was routing a troop of astonished Romanies out of the straw. Every child in their possession he examined. Not a mouse could have hidden them from the search he made.

"Never a white baby in the bunch," he reported, "though I found the one that bothered the huckster right enough. Somebody'd made a mistake that day, and washed his face!"

Corporal Haines, again, no sooner touched land after his dive into the Maryland marsh, than off he shot to discover the truth about a certain negress, reported by her wandering neighbours as the possessor of a white infant. But the woman, as Haines quickly discovered, was a player, and she had obtained the child from some institution for use on the stage.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM "THE CRANK."

For a bit things went quietly forward without the knowledge of the press. Then the fact came out—"STATE POLICE TAKE THE COUGHLIN CASE," in headlines all over the place. Following which, on June 20th, arose from the depths of his silence "The Crank," again demanding $12,000.

If you mean to play fair with me, as I think you did on the first payment . . . be at B & O Railway Station, 24th and Chestnut Streets, Tuesday, June 22nd, and take the 2.44 o'clock train in the afternoon for Baltimore, M.D. Thats the Express (when you see a) white flag with a black cross in the middle on your right side as you go throw (the money in a small) bag out of the window and you will get your boy back before four a.m. Wednesday June 23. Don't worry. Mr. Blakeley is well.

Several times in his earlier approaches, whether by letter or telephone, "The Crank" had proposed that the ransom be flung to him from bridges, from vehicles, from train windows, but not until now had he required that it should be delivered out of the State. Like all his acts, this move showed shrewdness. He thought he knew that the State Police, for all their swift freedom of county lines, would suffer let and hindrance at State boundaries, and his shrewdness only sharpened their zeal on his scent.

"We'll coax him along," said the Major to Mr. Coughlin. "We won't try to capture him now, because there is not time to cover the thing properly, and we can't take the risk of an unsuccessful effort. Write him a

letter. Say that you have not been able to raise the sum; that in any case you do not believe he has the child, and that without more proof you will pay no more money. Put the letter in a bag such as he describes. On June 22nd take the train that he indicates and follow his instructions to the letter."

Mr. Coughlin obeyed, and the Pennsylvania State Police made no attempt whatever to seize the person who picked up the parcel. Troopers sent to the spot shortly afterward determined, however, that one man only had done the errand, a man, by the way, who smoked Fatima cigarettes and chewed Spearmint gum.

The Major in Harrisburg, forecasting the future, said: "This is a good scheme. He has demanded the planting of a parcel in a certain manner. He has been obeyed and has got away with it unseen. He will pull it off again. We must encourage him."

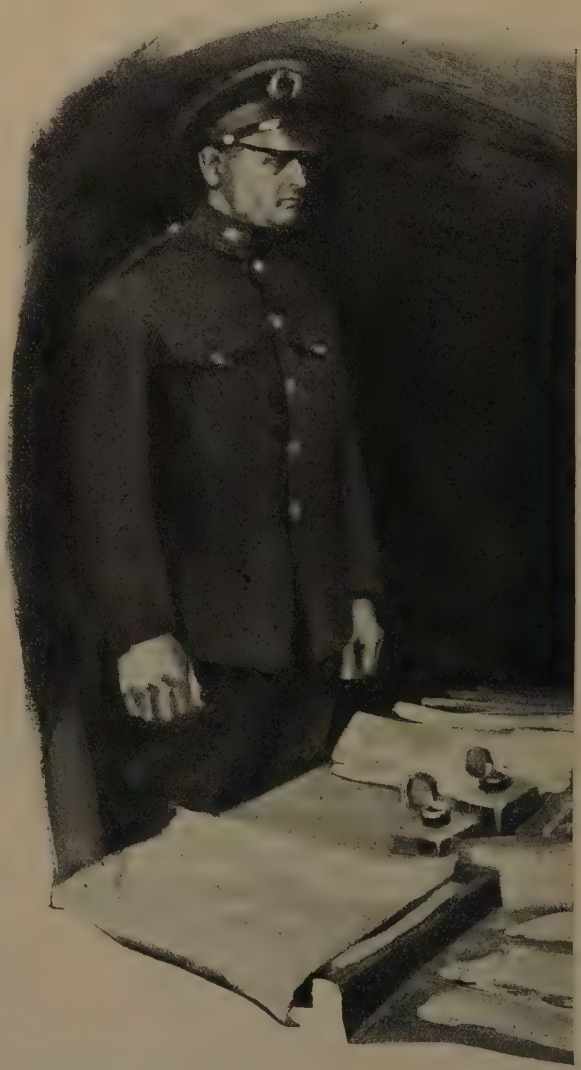
Now in those days the Major was running two jobs at once, the Pennsylvania State Police and the Coughlin case, which grew like the upas tree. So Adams spent half each night on the roads and half the other half in consultation with his officers.

On the night of June 22nd the headquarters' car rolled into Norristown just before one o'clock through a pouring rain. Gearhart himself opened his door to the superintendent, offering him all the hospitality that the hot-box afforded—a kitchen chair. Together the two men talked till dawn. Aeroplanes they discussed, dirigibles, more means than the lay mind knows how to name. At last they made their choice.

MYSTERIOUS ORDERS.

That morning orders went from headquarters at Harrisburg to the Pennsylvania State Police Training School at Newville that every recruit was immediately to be put into intensive training for cross-country running—sustained speed at distances of from one and one half to two miles over all sorts of ground. Orders went, also, to "A" Troop at Greensburg, that a certain beautiful young bloodhound, called "Commissioner," be at once brought east to "C" Troop in Pottsville, attended by Sergeant John J. Russell, his particular friend and intimate; and that with "C" Troop, "Commissoner" be extra-trained daily. In both cases no reasons were given.

Further, Major Mair, deputy superintendent of the Force, took the first train from Harrisburg to Philadelphia for a little confidential talk with his old chief in the American Expeditionary Force, General Atterbury, now returned to his job as Vice-President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This latter gentleman, because he knew Major Mair, and because he knew the Penn-

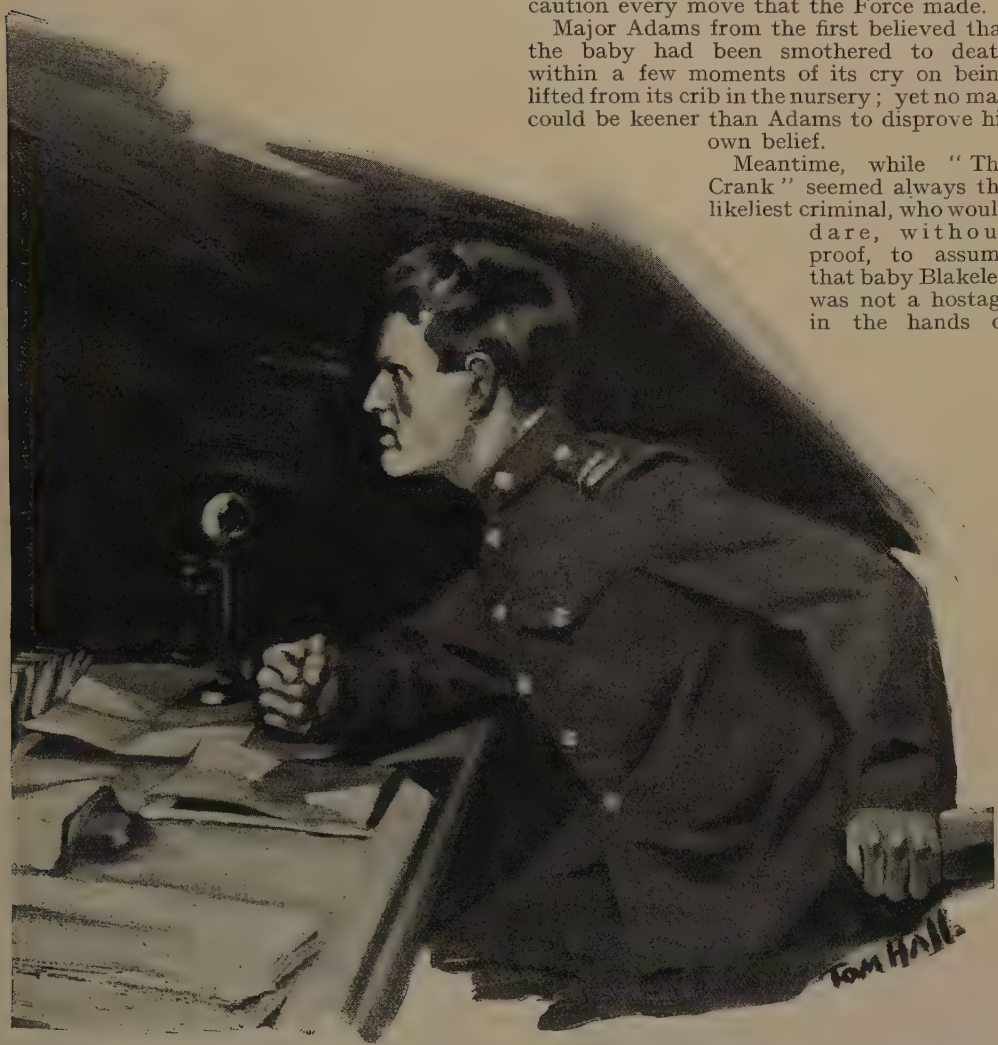


sylvania State Police Force, accepted Mair's laconic statement that his co-operation was needed "on a Government job," neither asking nor getting further details.

Vice-President Ewing, of the Reading Railroad, proved equally ready and friendly. When Mair returned to Harrisburg that day it was with the assurance that, at a moment's notice, for any train on any road running out of Philadelphia, a train consisting of an engine, two baggage cars, and a combination would be substituted, the regular train itself following at an interval to be fixed

by the superintendent of the Pennsylvania State Police Force.

Simultaneously, the newspapers were somehow permitted to contract the idea, first that Mr. Coughlin, in renewed communication with "The Crank" and still believing that "The Crank" possessed his



"Gearhart turned on him in a flash. 'Don't figure on leave or anything else till we *do* get him!' he snapped."

child, was disposed again to deal with him. Second, that the Coughlins and the State Police had fallen out, the latter resenting as unfair certain moves of the Coughlins made without their cognizance.

Now it should constantly be kept in mind that all this time a definite possibility existed that the child was alive and actually in "The Crank's" possession. Granting such to be the case, a growing likelihood existed that, in an access of fear brought on by some unfortunate step, the wretch might suddenly do away with his damning burden. This likelihood coloured with caution every move that the Force made.

Major Adams from the first believed that the baby had been smothered to death within a few moments of its cry on being lifted from its crib in the nursery; yet no man could be keener than Adams to disprove his own belief.

Meantime, while "The Crank" seemed always the likeliest criminal, who would dare, without proof, to assume that baby Blakeley was not a hostage in the hands of one of the endless strings of other blackmailers? From Trinidad in the West Indies, these miscreants wrote, from Los Angeles, from Georgia:—

I am tired of waiting for you to come through and tired of nursing your kid. The sharks can deal with him if you can't deal with me.

I have your baby and if you do not pay what I ask, as I ask it, within ten days from to-day, I will put out his eyes with Prussic acid.

The boy has turned sickly and cries all the

time. If you don't want him enough to pay for him I'll stop his noise.

So, while the Major perfected the plans laid out in the Norristown hot-box in the small hours of June 23rd, while, themselves unknown and invisible, he and Captain Gearhart guided the hand of Mr. Coughlin in leading "The Crank" into further parley, while these things went forward in council, the troopers of the State patiently continued to investigate.

"I don't believe it's possible to get the fellow," ventured one new man in Troop "C."

Gearhart turned on him in a flash.

"Don't figure on leave or anything else till we *do* get him!" he snapped. "Every man in the troop stays on the job till it is finished, and finished right, if it takes a year. And remember *this* in our work always: If ever you doubt you are going to succeed, quit altogether. *You don't belong in the uniform.*"

In "C" Troop, Private Gosselin and Corporals Haines and Snodgrass alone travelled twelve thousand miles hunting down pretenders. Every troop had its full share in such work, for every quarter of the Commonwealth, as well as every part of the country, developed its own crop of blackmailers or seekers after excitement, and these must be hunted singly and handled with the utmost quietude.

"For now," said Adams, "it is no longer a question of the Coughlins and their baby only. It's a question of every parent and every baby in the whole United States. Kidnapping is ready to become an industry. Unless the kidnapper of Blakeley Coughlin is found, convicted, and punished, no child anywhere will be safe from abduction. *It is up to us.*"

Then he himself plunged into the field, sometimes disappearing for a week at a stretch, while five good troop captains, working together as one mind, steered four hundred steel-eyed men, and Gearhart sat tight at the main switch-board, a telephone within touch of his lips and a covey of motor-cycle men, like a handful of lightning, ready to flash wherever his nod should direct.

Meantime, guided always by the State Police, Mr. Coughlin continued to lure "The Crank" further and further into parley—a parley conducted on the one hand by newspaper insertions, on the other by post—hoping always for the dropping of some hint that might lead to his identification. So, what with one pretext and another, the thing moved along until July 29th. On that day the letter-writer flatly asserted that unless he received the ransom by August 2nd, the child would never again be seen alive.

"Now," said the State's officers, "our time has come. We must negotiate." They directed Mr. Coughlin to reply to the threat with a newspaper advertisement stating his willingness to deal. Once more Adams and Gearhart together went over their plan.

"What if 'The Crank' *telephones* his reply?" said Adams. "It won't give us much time, two or three hours maybe. No chance for anything better than a rifle shot from a train window. Poor police work!"

"We'll cut the Coughlins' wire," said Gearhart. "Then he'll have to write."

They cut it. So on Friday, July 30th, Mr. Coughlin received this letter, and rushed with it to the hot-box:—

I tried to get you on the phone to-day but you must have been out because I could get no answer. . . . This is going to be your last chance to get him back. We go halfway with you—$6,000 in cash . . . and the rest in check, on condition that you will not stop payment on those check after you get the boy, because they might get one of us when he go to cash the check but the rest of us will get you.

Use the Reading ferry at Chestnut St. and get the Atlantic City train that leave Camden at 2.10 and sit on your right as you get in the train and keep a good watch out of the window on your right and when you see a white flag throw the bag out of the window. Because it depend on us. If we get the money you get the boy. If we don't, you don't. . . . We are not going to keep him no longer. Too risky. Get the 2.10 p.m. train from Camden on Monday, August the 3rd. I garantee that your boy will be home August the 4th before 4 a.m.

If you don't pay I might just as well say good-bye for you for your boy.

"Perfect!" whispered Gearhart to his own shadow—and shot the news on to Harrisburg.

Then he arose, stretched himself, and walked out of his six weeks' prison, once more a free man, breathing the cool air joyfully.

Don't miss next month's thrilling instalment.

A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA

by Rose Wilder Lane

Very few people know just where Albania is; still fewer know anything about it. The interior is a maze of mountains, inhabited by wild tribes who have preserved their independence and their own peculiar manners and customs for thousands of years.

In these fascinating articles Mrs. Lane describes her adventures among the remote northern mountains—a picturesque country where the tribal blood-feud still flourishes and where the rare Western visitor finds himself back in the Middle Ages.

Illustrated by R. CATON WOODVILLE, and from Photographs by ANNETTE MARQUIS.

II.

REXH awakened us next morning at eight by shaking us. Outside was the sound of a steady pouring rain.

As soon as we were fully roused, the Bishop's servant brought us tiny cups of Turkish coffee. That was breakfast. Afterward we rose with groans, opened the heavy wooden shutters of the window space, and looked out. Through a rain almost as solid as a waterfall we saw a low-walled courtyard and a school-house.

Beyond the school-house there lay some fifty miles of the wildest mountain country—blue peaks, fifteen-hundred-foot slanting rocks, soft pink and rose and purple and green, brighter green masses of young foliage in the valleys; bronze-brown and bright-brown bare forests above them; and here and there snowdrifts flung up among smoky-grey clouds. Thirty-two waterfalls I counted from that window, veining the mountains with wandering streaks of silver. But our gaze came back and fastened upon the school.

"I didn't know they had one in the mountains!" exclaimed Alex, thinking of her Mountain School Fund. "I thought our school at Thethis would be the first one."

"Padre Marjan certainly said so, when he walked down to ask us for it," said Betsy.

"Perhaps this isn't a school," I suggested, though it certainly looked like one. Through the open door we saw rows of benches, and boys sitting on them, barefooted, wearing long, tight white trousers braided with black, the gorgeous sashes, and the short black jackets thick with fringe, that were white centuries ago, but were changed to mourning when Scanderbeg died for Albanian liberty.

It *was* a school. The pale, meek priest in black showed it to us with pride; he is the teacher. The Turks and the Austrians had blocked all attempts to bring schools into the mountains, he said, and the people, not knowing that such things existed, were naturally not eager to have them. But now the Land of the Eagle was said to be free, after so many centuries of Turkish rule in the valleys, and refugee children who had fled before the Serbs were coming back to their tribes and telling about the American school in Scutari, so that all the people wanted their children to learn to read and write. The Chiefs themselves, hearing that there was a government at Tirana, and not being able to write or read letters about it, or to learn from newspapers—oh, simple-minded, mediæval people!—the truth about European politics, saw what education meant.

So they had taken rocks from the mountains and built the school-house. They had cut down precious trees and made the benches and the desks. They had made a blackboard out of a slab of the native rock, set in a rough wooden frame; they wrote upon it with softer rocks. From Italy, across the Adriatic to Durazzo, up to Tirana, to Scutari, and into the mountains—a two weeks' journey by donkey and river ferry—the Bishop had got three copy-books and a bottle of ink. Pens had been made from twigs. The priest had even one book printed in Albanian!

Since the boys must herd the flocks in the mountains, they could not spend the whole day in school. There is so little land that the goats and sheep are fed from trees. The shepherd climbs a tree, carefully cuts

the tender branches, and throws them down to the nibbling beasts. There is no tree in all the mountains that the shepherds have not climbed; not a tree that is not a gnarled, branchless trunk.

So the school was open from six to nine in the mornings, and the boys came to it, some from ten, twelve, fifteen miles away, and after school they walked back again and took out the flocks. The school had been open six weeks; already the copybooks were half-filled with beautiful, neat writing, and the boys not only read easily from their one book, but had no difficulty with sentences that Perolli wrote on the slate.

I asked the priest what I could send him from Paris, and his eyes filled with tears as he asked, hesitating a little for fear it was too much, if I could send just a little white paper and half-a-dozen pencils? The ink was almost gone; they could make more from berries, but he would like the boys to see pencils and learn how to use them. And of course, when the two copybooks were filled, there would be no more paper.

At noon the rain was still pouring from apparently inexhaustible skies, but Cheremi, Rexh, and Perolli assumed as a matter of course that we would go on; the difficulty was that there were no mules. There should have been a mule in the village, whose houses were scattered miles apart, all the way down the deep-walled gorge to the banks of the River Shala, twenty-five miles away; but when Cheremi hastened lightly up a twelve-hundred-foot peak and cried to the farthest house that we wanted mules, the answer came back that there were none since the war.

So he found an aged man—seventy-five years old, but still agile and bright-eyed—and put our packs on his back, and at noon we started out on foot, with fresh-peeled staffs provided by Rexh, and new-baked corn-bread in the saddle-bags.

After an hour of desperate climbing we stood on the peak from which Cheremi had telephoned. The Bishop's house and the school lay dwarfed beneath our feet, and Perolli, standing on a rock and holding his ears, sent down to them a shrill hail. "Ooeeoo! Monsignor!"

The Bishop appeared in his woollen gown, a rifle in his hand, and all the guns in our party went off at once, and again, and again, while fifty miles of sheer rock-cliffs barked back echoes at them. My hands were over my ears, but I saw the three answering white puffs from the Bishop's rifle, and while the echoes were dying, still repeating themselves down the valley, we saw him hand it to his servant and protect his ear-drums with his thumbs. His call came clearly up to us. "Go on a smooth trail!"

"Now," said Perolli, thrusting his revolver back into its holster, "we have said good-bye to the Bishop. *Allons!*"

"And to-night," I said joyously, "we'll sleep in a native house."

Betsy and Perolli did not seem enthusiastic about that hope, and as we toiled up trails that were stairways of giant boulders, or slid down slopes of pale green shale, above valleys where the clouds swirled beneath us, the discussion continued fragmentarily.

"Don't you think it safe to stay in a native house?" said I, remembering that Perolli was an officer of the Government travelling *incognito* among unfriendly tribes, and that within sight were the Albanian mountains held by the Serbs—who had put a price on his head.

THE "LAW OF LEK."

"Safe?" said he scornfully. "A man is always safe in another man's house! It has happened, not once, but often, in these mountains, that a man has given shelter to a fugitive and found, while the guest sat at his fire, that he was harbouring a man who had shot the son of the house not an hour before. The neighbours bring in the body, and the father sits beside it, with the murderer under his roof. And the father gives him coffee and food and drink, and rolls cigarettes for him, until the guest is ready to go, and then he accompanies him for an hour's journey, so that none of the tribe can injure him, and bids him a courteous farewell on the trail. 'Go on a smooth road,' he says. 'There is a Word of Peace between us for a day and a night because you are my guest. After that, I will follow you all my life, until I kill you.'"

I began to see the exquisite, infinite complications of the Law of Lek, which guides these people in all their actions, and I thought, "This goes back beyond the Middle Ages," remembering the old Bible stories of the time when men lived similarly, under the laws of Moses.

We had begun that day with ponchos over our sweaters; our *gendarmes* had begun it by taking off their jackets and trousers, so that the sluicing rain would not wet them. These garments were in the packs, protected by ponchos, and bare-legged, bare-armed, with only the coloured sashes about their waists and cloths wound around their heads, the men went up and down the interminable trails as easily as panthers. Now and then they stopped and, kneeling on the trail, reached down a hand to one of us, pulling us up over unusually large and steep boulders; and from time to time, as we struggled and panted after them, they offered to carry us. With the blood pounding in our heads, blinding and deafening us, our lungs torn with gasping, we refused, and struggled on. Our gloves had become sodden in a moment; we stripped them off, and

"There is a Word of Peace between us for a day and a night. After that, I will follow you all my life, until I kill you."

soon the ponchos, which impeded our climbing, followed them, and then, as we were wet to the skin anyway, we discarded our sweaters. At each step our feet made a sucking sound in the water that filled our shoes, but the exertion of climbing and sliding kept our bodies warm, and by degrees, as suppleness returned to our stiff muscles, we began to notice the magic country around us. We stood on rocks from which we saw a hundred miles of snow-tipped peaks, blue gorges, bronze-brown forests. White and smoke-coloured clouds swirled beneath us, and through rifts in them we beheld tiny green terraced fields, the blue hair-line of water in stone-walled irrigation ditches, and houses tiny as those on a relief-map, made of stone and almost indistinguishable from the native rocks, as large as themselves, among which they nestled.

"I shall not be happy until I stay in one of them," I said, and at that moment we heard a hail from Cheremi, who stood on the staircase trail thirty feet above our heads. He motioned toward three cone-shaped peaks of solid rock that, rising steeply from the gorge three thousand feet below, towered some hundreds of feet above the level of our eyes. Little Rexh, silent and watchful as ever at Betsy's side, translated his words.

"There is an old city," he said, "the city of Pog. He says it was built by his people, men of the Land of the Eagle, a hundred hundred years before the Romans came."

"Tell him to wait where he is," we exclaimed, for, looking again at the nearest cone-shaped mountain, we saw on its top traces of old walls, and on its sides what might once have been a circling road. We clambered up the trail to ask Cheremi about it.

A DESERTED CITY.

"It is a very old city," said Cheremi. "It was built before men began to remember." Standing on the edge of the trail, which was also the edge of the gorge, he looked across perhaps a quarter of a mile of space to the sharp-pointed peak of rock. Gazing steadily, we saw the fragment of a wall, and below it, spiralling around the tall, slender cone of the mountain, traces of a road that had been walled, and a broken flight of four broad steps, torn apart by the roots of a tree. It was the only tree we could see on the three-thousand-foot height, but like all the others of the forests, it was a gnarled, branchless trunk; its young boughs had been cut every spring to feed the goats.

"Does anyone live there now?" we asked.

"No," said Cheremi. "It is a place where the Ora love to sit, and sometimes one hears them crying, like trees in a wind, when there is no wind. But no human person lives there."

"What is an Ora?" I asked, when Perolli had translated.

"An Ora is a spirit of the forest, the soul of a tree or a rock—a Nature spirit," said Betsy. "You know the Greek Oreads? Well, that's the Greek name of the Albanian Ora; the Greeks got them from the Albanians."

"And they still live in these mountains?"

"Apparently. Did you ever see an Ora, Cheremi?" she asked him in Albanian.

"No. Very few people see them. But I have heard them singing, and once, in the Wood of the Ora, which we will pass to-morrow, I heard them talking together in the twilight. I heard them say that my cousin would die," said Cheremi seriously.

"And did he die?"

"Of course," he replied, surprised by the question. "He was a strong man, but within six weeks, sitting beside the fire one night, he said that he felt a pain in his heart, and in an hour he was dead." Cheremi crossed himself.

"But about the city of Pog. Does anyone ever go there? Could we go there?"

"People sometimes went," he said; "the shepherds always went to cut the branches of the tree, which belonged to the tribe of Pultit."

"How far was it from where we stood?"

He thought for a time, and then said: "Four hours." Albanians have no measure for distance except the time it takes to walk it, and this time corresponds with no measurement of ours. He had said that our walk of that day would be an hour and a half; we had already been exhausting every ounce of energy and breath for four, and were scarcely a third of the way.

"What does one find when one gets there?"

"Very little. There is the old wall which you see, and on the rock one can follow the lines of the walls of houses, built square and with many rooms, and from the rocks which have fallen they must have been tall houses. That is all, except that on some of the large stones one can see that the sun-circle was carved. But there is still treasure buried there."

"How do you know?"

"I know because I have seen men who have seen it. There was a man of Pultit whom I know. He went to the old city of Pog one day with his goats. There had been a great storm, and part of the wall had fallen. Before that day the wall had had a corner, where now you see nothing. Where the wall had fallen there was a golden image of a man, as large as himself, shining in the sun. The man of Pultit forgot his goats in looking at it. It was too heavy for him to carry, so he took a stone and broke off four of its fingers, and with them in his sash he went to get his brothers to help him carry away the image.

" But it was night before he reached their house, and they said it was better not to go to that city until morning. In the morning they went, and where the image had been there was nothing but stones. Afterward, thinking of nothing but that image, the man went mad, and he now lives alone and naked in the mountains, talking to the Ora and begging them to take him again to that image. But before that, he sold the fingers to the gold-beaters in Scutari, and they said those fingers were of the purest gold and not alloyed as gold is now. I did not see the fingers, but many did, before they were beaten into ornaments."

" What do you think became of the image ? "

" Doubtless it had a bird or snake for guardian, and that spirit came and took it away again," said Cheremi gravely ; and Perolli explained that when one buries a treasure one calls to some creature of the woods and entrusts the hoard to its care.

" But does Cheremi really believe these things ? " I asked myself, and looking at his serious face, and Perolli's, I was struck with the startling idea that Perolli believed them, too, in spite of his English suit and European education.

We went on, up and down the trail, over mountain after mountain that at home no one would dream of climbing. The rain fell again, bringing premature night down with the flood of water, and again we came into clear weather and saw all the colours of sunset on the clouds below and around us.

Many times we passed above villages that clung like birds' nests on the cliffs below the trail, and once Cheremi stopped at the brink and, closing his ears firmly with his thumbs, sent out into the interminable miles of air the clear high note of the " telephone call."

A voice from the depths responded, and searching with our eyes we discovered a white-and-black figure among the rocks some hundreds of feet below. Then this conversation ensued :

" Are you a man ? "

" I am a woman of Shoshi, married in Pultit."

" What is the name of your husband ? "

" The name of my husband is Lulash."

" Say to your husband, Lulash, that Cheremi is on the trail. Cheremi goes to Plani with four strangers from far away and with a Mohammedan youth of Scutari. To-night Cheremi will be in Plani. Say to Lulash that he may bring to Cheremi in Plani the hundred kronen which he owes him."

" I will say to my husband, Lulash, that Cheremi is on the trail. Cheremi goes to Plani with four strangers from far away and with a Mohammedan youth of Scutari. To-night Cheremi will be in Plani. I will say to Lulash that he may bring to Cheremi in Plani the hundred kronen which he owes him."

" *Oo-ee-oo-oo !* " The final shrill call came circling back among the peaks like ripples of disturbed water, and up through its circling came the answering call of the woman. Since he had been telephoning to a woman, Cheremi did not fire his rifle three times, for which my ears were grateful.

We went on. And once, as I clambered up the side of a rock-pile that the child of a giant might have made in building a tower with blocks, my staff dislodged a stone the size of my head, and Cheremi, turning like a cat, flung himself downward and caught it as it tottered on the trail's edge. Then I looked, and saw far below the miniature images of a woman and a cradle, set among moving white spots that were sheep, and I saw that the rock would have gone down the slope like a bomb from an aeroplane and struck the cradle beside which the woman was sitting.

" One must be careful on the trails," said Cheremi, and as the men at that moment had finished a song with a joyous fusillade of rifle shots, I asked if people were not sometimes killed by stray bullets. Perolli said that of course it happened now and then, but everyone understood that the killing was an accident, and it caused no blood-feud. Accidents, he remarked, will happen anywhere, and he spoke of the death-toll of automobiles, which at that moment seemed as far from my knowledge as the twenty centuries that separated us from them.

An Albanian shepherd.

One of the men, who had run ahead a few miles to inform the village of Plani that we were coming, now popped up out of the gathering darkness to announce that the priest refused to receive us in his house.

" The *macaroni !* " cried our men, with a contempt like vitriol. " The priest must be of Italian blood ; no Albanian would have been such a dog," they said. Then we sat down on the mountain-side to consider what we should do.

" Why won't the priest take us in ? " I asked, shivering in

my wet garments, for night had brought chill down from the snow-covered peaks above us. They were still pale fawn colour and pink where the clouds left them unhidden, but the valleys were black, and far away on some distant slope there was a small light, red as a ruby—the flare from a charcoal-burner's fire.

"He says he has no servant," replied the man who had run ahead; and even Cheremi, the joyous *gendarme*, snorted aloud.

"Priest though he is, he is a *macaroni!* and only a *macaroni* would so disgrace our villages!" the Albanians exclaimed, shamed before the strangers by such incredible inhospitality.

"Perhaps he knows who you are, and is afraid to take us in?" I said to Perolli.

"No; he doesn't know who we are, and is afraid to shelter strangers who may be Serbian or English spies. Coward!" cried Perolli.

"My house," Cheremi volunteered hopefully, "is only across two mountain ranges. You would be welcome there."

Concealed by the darkness we lay back in our wet clothes on the wet rocks and shook with smothered laughter, while Perolli, with a hundred honeyed words, made excuses for the feebleness of foreign women, already weary with only sixteen miles of mountain climbing. He was still explaining when up the trail came the flare of a torch, and an Albanian boy of perhaps fourteen years appeared, a turban on his head, a rifle on his back, and a silver-hilted knife stuck through his orange sash.

"May you live long!" said he.

"May you live long!" said we.

"How could you?" He meant: "How did you get here?"

"Slowly, slowly, little by little," we replied.

A WELCOME INVITATION.

"Are you a man?" said Perolli.

"I am a man of Pultit, of the village of Plani, of the house of Marke Gjonni," said the boy. "In our house there is always a welcome for the stranger. The door of the house of Marke Gjonni is open to you."

"Glory to your lips and to your feet," said Perolli, and to us, in English: "His father has sent him to ask us to come to his house. What do you think?"

"Is anyone going to think?" we cried, joyfully. "There'll be a fire, won't there?"

We followed the boy up the mountain-side, our lungs sobbing and our feet slipping on the trail, dimly lighted by the torch and so steep that the palms of our hands were bruised by climbing it. Out of the ceaseless swishing murmur of falling water that had surrounded us all day one note rose above the rest. Flying spray was like a mist on our faces; we were following the edge of a waterfall hidden by the dark. Then the trail turned; we stood on a level ledge, and suddenly all the rifles in the world seemed to go off not ten feet away.

"It's all right!" Perolli's shout came up from the darkness beneath our feet. "They're only welcoming you!" But I have never felt so defenceless as I did standing there, clutching Betsy and Alex, while sharp flashes darted out of the blackness and deafening explosions contended with more deafening echoes. All the household of Marke Gjonni stood on the trail, every man firing his rifle until it was empty. Then a woman appeared with a torch, her beautiful face and two heavy braids of hair painted on the darkness like a Rembrandt, and we made our way through a jumble of greetings and up a flight of stone steps along the side of a blank stone wall, and so through a low, arched stone doorway.

THE HOUSE OF GJONNI.

The stone-walled room was large—as large as the house itself—and low-ceilinged, and filled with shadows. Near the farther end, on the stone floor, a fire burnt in a ring of ashes. In the corner near the door several goats, two kids, and two sheep stopped their browsing on a heap of dry-leaved branches, and looked at us with large eyes shining in the torch-light. Five or six women came out of the shadows to greet us, and behind us the men were coming in, reloading their rifles, hanging them on pegs, closing and bolting the heavy wooden door.

Rexh and our two *gendarmes* were already busy, unrolling the packs, spreading our blankets over heaps of dried grass on the other side of the fire. In a moment we were sitting comfortably on them, extending wet feet toward the flames. While one of our hosts put a fresh armful of brush on the fire, another hacked slivers of pitch-pine from a great knot of it and set them blazing in a small wrought-iron basket that hung from the ceiling. A third, with hollowed-out wooden bowls of coffee, sugar, and water around him, began making Turkish coffee in a tiny, long-handled iron bowl set in the hot ashes.

"We're going to have a night in a native house after all," said I happily, and added, starting, "What's that?" A long, thin, curiously unearthly sound—hardly a wail, though that is the nearest word I have for it—was abroad in the night that surrounded the stone house. Even the shadows seemed to crouch a little nearer the fire, hearing it, and when it ceased the splashing of the waterfall was louder in the stillness. Then the man with the coffee-pot pushed it farther among the coals, and with the little grating noise the movement of the household recovered and went on.

"Are you a man?" said our host courteously, turning his clear dark eyes on Perolli;

and Perolli, silencing me with a glance, folded his arms more comfortably around his drawn-up knees and began the proper conversation of a guest.

By degrees the house of Marke Gjonni grew clearer to our eyes; they became accustomed to the firelight and the shadows, and saw the guns hanging on the wall, the browsing goats that, with a little tinkling of bells, worried and tore at the dried green cradles stood near the fire, covered tightly over high footboards and headboards with heavy blankets.

Meantime Cheremi was taking off our shoes and stockings and bathing our feet in cold water brought by one of the women. This was proper, since when guests arrive the member of the family nearest to them by ties of blood or affection acts as their servant, and Cheremi, being an Albanian

A group of Shala men and women. In the centre stands the woman of Pultit.

leaves on the oak branches heaped for them, the outlines of a painted wooden chest filled with cornmeal, at which a woman worked, making a loaf of bread on a flat board. One of the men raked out some embers and set in them a round flat iron pan on legs—the Cross and the Sun-circle were wrought on its bottom. In the midst of the flames he laid its cover to heat. Soon the woman came with the bread—a loaf two feet across and two inches thick—and deftly slid it from the board into the pan, which it exactly fitted. One of the children put the cover over it, and buried all in hot ashes.

There were ten or twelve children—little girls, half naked, with serious beautiful faces and long-lashed brown eyes, small boys dignified in little long tight trousers of white wool beautifully braided in black, short fringed black jackets and coloured sashes, and turbans like those of their fathers. Two who knew us, was judged to stand in that position. By the time we had drawn on dry woollen stockings from our packs the first cup of coffee was ready. To the boiling water in the tiny pot the coffee-maker added two spoonfuls of the powdered coffee, two of sugar, stirred the mixture till it foamed, and poured it into a handleless little cup which he offered to Perolli. But Perolli indicated me, and without the slightest revelation of his surprise the host changed his gesture.

"Beauty and good to you," said I in Albanian, prompted by Perolli, and when I had drunk the thimbleful, "Good trails!" said I, handing back the cup. For this is the manner in which one drinks coffee. Do not make the mistake, when next you are in the Albanian mountains, of saying the same things when you are offered *rakejia*. For *rakejia* there is a quite different form of courtesies. And as soon as the coffee-cup,

rinsed and re-filled with freshly-made coffee, has been given to each guest in turn, you will be offered *rakejia*.

Alex and Betsy and I looked at each other, but we drained the large goblet of colourless liquid fire in turn, without a word of protest. It might have been the water that it looked like, so far as it affected our minds or tongues, for I continue to ascribe to the fire-warmth and the blessed sensation of resting after those terrible trails the sense of contentment that filled us all.

"Where is America?" asked our hosts, and "How large are your tribes? Do they have villages like ours, and mountains? Do you raise corn? How many donkey-loads do you raise to a field, and what is your method of cultivating the soil? Have you stone ditches for carrying water from the rivers to the fields?"

Rousing ourselves, we tried to give them in words a picture of our cities; we told of horses made of iron, fed by coal, snorting black clouds of smoke and racing at great speeds for long distances on roads made of iron; and I told of the irrigation systems of California and Oregon, of orchards ploughed by steel-shod ploughs, of great machines as large as houses, cutting grain on the plains of Kansas, of mountain streams like Albanian mountain streams, which we harness as one might harness a donkey, and how their invisible strength is carried unseen on wires for many, many long hours—as far as an Albanian could walk in two days—and used to turn wheels far away.

Resting comfortably on their heels around the fire, they listened as one would listen to a traveller from Mars, the men opening silver tobacco boxes and deftly rolling cigarettes for us, the women spinning, the children—each given its space in the circle—propping little chins on beautiful, delicate hands and listening wide-eyed. The questions they asked—and the elders were as courteous to the children's curiosity as the children were to theirs—were keen and intelligent, but when it came to explaining electricity I was as helpless as they and could answer only with vague indications of some strange unknown force which we use without understanding it.

A woman, bare-footed, bare-armed, graceful as a sculptor's hope of a statue, lifted the cover from the baking-pan, crossed herself, made the sign of the cross over the hot loaf, and took it up. Stooping, with the smoking golden disc between her hands, she stopped, suddenly struck motionless. The long, strange cry came again through the darkness, like a voice of the wind and the mountains and the night.

"Look here, Perolli," said I, my nerves unexpectedly relaxing into the kind of anger that is part of fear, "what is that? Don't be an idiot! Tell me!"

"It is an Ora, if you *must* know," said Perolli, and he looked at me defiantly, as though he expected me to laugh.

"An Ora?" said Betsy, sitting up. The strange unearthly call came again, very far away this time; we strained our ears to hear it. Then followed silence and the roaring of the river. The turbaned men in the circle of firelight, who had understood the word, nodded.

"Holy crickets, Rose Lane, we're actually hearing an Oread!" exclaimed Betsy; but Alex said, "Oh, no! Undoubtedly there is some natural explanation."

"How do you know there isn't what you call a natural explanation for an Oread?" Betsy demanded, and the wild notion crossed my mind that if Perolli had not been with fellow-sharers of the blessings of Western civilization he would have been crossing himself instead of lighting another cigarette. Little Rexh, in his red fez, spoke earnestly. "Do not believe there are no Ora or devils in these mountains, Mrs. Lane. There are very many of them."

"Of course," said I, and I do not know how much I believed it and how much I assumed that I did in order to encourage our hosts to talk. "Do you often see Ora in this village?" I said across the fire to the many intelligent, watching eyes, and Rexh picked up our words and turned them into Albanian or English as we talked.

"We do not *see* the Ora," said a tall man with many heavy silver chains around his neck. "Do you see them in your country?"

"I do not think they live in the West," said I. "I think that they are very old, like the Albanians, and, like you, do not leave their mountains. This is the first time I have ever been where they live, and I should like to meet one." (I doubt if I should have said that, if I had been outside those solid stone walls.)

"Perhaps you will hear them talking when you go through the Wood of the Ora," said a woman.

THE MYSTERIOUS "ORA."

"Very few people have ever seen them," said the coffee-maker, licking a cigarette and placing his left hand on his heart as he offered it to me. I fitted it into my cigarette holder; he lifted a burning twig from the fire and lighted it. "Now my father was accompanied by an Ora all his life, but he was the only one who saw it, and he told no one about it until just before he died."

"Did he ever talk with her?"

"No; but she always walked before him on every safe trail. He was sixteen when he first saw her. He was watching the goats in the mountains. She appeared before him, standing on the trail. He said that he knew at once that she was not of our kind, because she was so beautiful. She was about twelve years old, wearing clothing not like ours,

but of a white and shining material—my father said that it was like mist and fire, but he could not say what it was. Her hair was golden. She stood on the trail and with her hand she made a sign to him to stop, and he stopped, and they looked at each other for a long time. Then he spoke to her, but she did not answer. She was not there. And my father went on, and found on the trail he would have taken a great rock that had just fallen, and he knew that the Ora had saved his life.

"He came home, and said nothing. The next morning when he went out with the goats the Ora was waiting outside the door, and she went before him all that day. Always after that, whenever he left the house, she went before him on the trails.

"My father was a strong man and very wise. He married and had many children; he fought the Turks and the Austrians and the Serbs and the Italians. He had a good life. But he never went anywhere unless the Ora went before him. In the morning, when he left the house, if she was not there he returned and sat by the fire that day. Often on the trails he was with many people, but none but him ever saw the Ora. She remained always the same, always the size of a twelve-year-old child, always very beautiful, shining white and with golden hair.

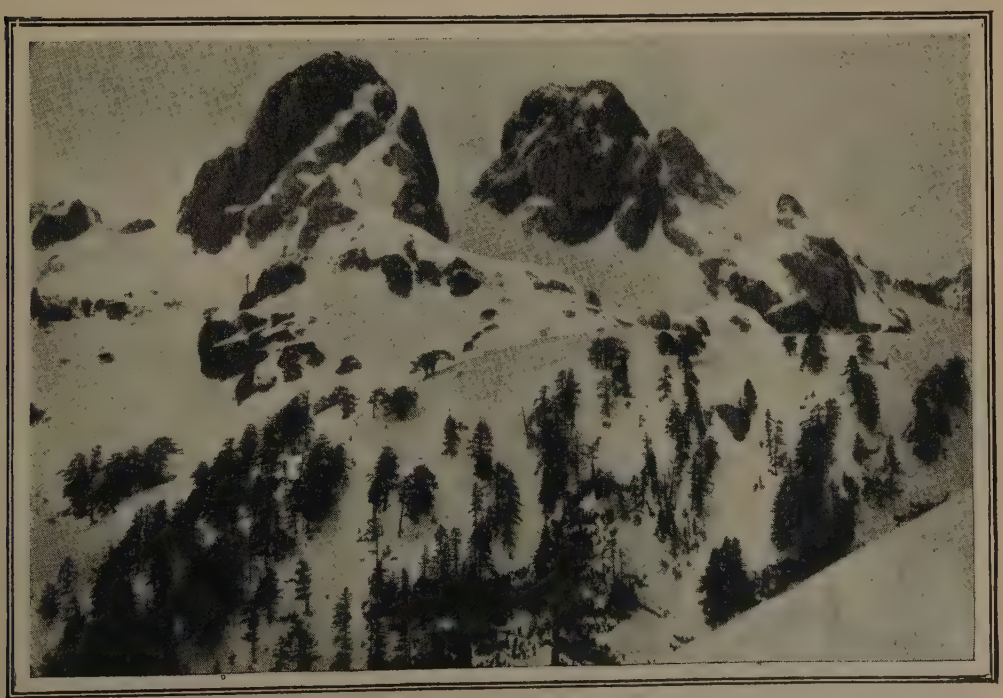
"When she turned aside on the trail, my father turned also, and the people did as he did, though he did not say why. My father was known as a very wise man. Many times he saved the lives of other people by following the Ora."

Several of the older men in the intently-listening circle shook their heads, as though they remembered this, and when I asked them with my eyes they said, "Po! Po!" which means "Yes."

"When my father was sixty-five years old, strong and healthy," continued the coffee-maker, "one day the Ora did not come. She did not come the next day, nor the next, nor the next, for many days. Then my father knew that she would not come again and that it was his time to die. So he arranged all his affairs and died. Just before he died he told us about the Ora; he told us so that we would know why he was making ready for death, because his Ora had left him."

There was a moment of contemplative silence. Beyond the circle of firelight the goats still tore and worried the dried leaves from the oak branches. A woman came leisurely forward and put an iron pan on the coals. When it was hot she brought scraps of pork and laid them in it. Rexh, the little Mohammedan, turned his head so that he should not smell that unclean meat. Betsy said to Perolli, in a ravenous voice: "How much longer will it be before we can eat?"

He looked at her reprovingly. "In Albania it is not polite to care about food," he told her.



The Chafa Bishkasit, or "Road of the Mountaineers," the gateway of the Albanian highlands.

"But it's past midnight, and we've had nothing to eat since noon!" Betsy mourned.

"Slowly, slowly, little by little," said Perolli soothingly. For myself, I curled more comfortably among the blankets, too contented to ask for anything at all. It was as though I had returned to a place that I knew long ago and found myself at home there.

"That lady Ora was no doubt betrothed to one of her own people," said a man who had not previously spoken. "Now in my lost country of Ipek—may the Serbs who are murdering her feel our teeth in their throats!—I know a man who was married to an Ora."

A woman, barefooted, wearing a skirt of heavy black and white wool, a wide, silver-studded leather belt and a blouse of sheer white, her two thick black braids of hair falling from beneath a crimson head-kerchief almost to her knees, came out of the shadows beyond the fire and lowered from her shoulder a beautifully shaped wooden jar of water. She held it braced against her hip, and stooping, poured a thin stream over our outstretched hands. Another woman handed us each a towel of hand-woven red-and-white-plaided linen. Then we sat expectantly, but only a wooden bowl of cheese was set on the floor before us.

It was goat's milk cheese, rather like the cottage-cheese of home, except that it was hard, cut in cubes, and of an acrid, sourish flavour. We each took a piece and nibbled it. "Oh, Perolli, can't you tell them we're starving? It's almost one o'clock in the morning!" cried Betsy pathetically.

"Be patient," said Perolli. "How many times must I say that it isn't polite in Albania to be so greedy?"

"But it's eleven hours since any of us had a bite!" Betsy protested. "Don't tell me Cheremi and our other men aren't starving."

"Albanians don't care so much about food," said Perolli. "I'm not hungry." He lit another cigarette, and seeing the circle of politely incurious eyes fixed on us, I said: "Tell them that we are very much interested in the story about the Ora, and that we want to hear about the man who married one."

The man who had spoken of that unearthly marriage rolled and licked a cigarette, offered it to Alex with his hand on his heart, rolled himself another, lighted both with a blazing twig, and settled comfortably on his heels, and began.

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A SPIRIT.

"This man was my friend, well known to me and to all the families of Ipek. A strong man, a good fighter, and respected by all. But his life was not complete, for the girl his father had chosen for him had died, and he was not married. There were many girls he might have had, girls of Montenegro and even of Shala and Shoski and Kossova, but he said that he did not wish to marry. He came to his thirty-seventh year, and was not married.

"One night he was sitting alone in his house, making a cup of coffee in the ashes of the fire, when the door opened. He looked, and there was a woman who had come out of the darkness. She was no woman of our tribe, nor of any other tribe of man, though she was dressed like our women. My friend looked at her, and said to himself that he had never known women could be so beautiful. And he knew, though he did not know how he knew, that she was not of our kind.

"He said to her, 'Long life to you!' and she replied, 'And to you, long life!' She came and sat by his fire, and he gave her the cup of coffee one gives a guest. She drank it and returned the cup to him, saying, 'Good trails to your feet!' Then they looked at each other for some time without speaking.

"Then she said to him, 'Am I not beautiful?' And he said, 'Yes.' She said to him, 'Have you ever seen a woman more beautiful?' And he said 'No.' And after she had been silent for a long time she said to him, 'Will you marry me?' And he said 'No.'

"She said to him, 'Do you think you will find a woman more beautiful than I?' He looked at her between the eyes and said, 'I know that I shall never see a woman as beautiful.' She said, 'Then, will you marry me?' And he said 'No.'

"'Why will you not marry me?' she asked, and he said, 'I do not wish to marry.' So for a time they sat silent, and then she said, 'Do not forget me,' and went away.

"He told me these things, and I said to him, 'She was an Ora.' He said 'Yes, I know.' I said, 'Was she a gipsy Ora?' For as you know, there are two kinds of Oras, and if she were a gipsy Ora I would have been troubled for my friend. He said, 'No, she was a lady Ora.' We spoke no more about it.

"Three years went by, to a day, and again it happened that my friend was sitting alone in his house, making a cup of coffee in the ashes of the fire, when again the door opened.

"It was the third coming of that day of the year on which the Ora had come out of the darkness, and when the door opened he knew, without turning to see, who it was.

"She came in, and he turned and said, 'Long life to you!' Then he saw that with her was a man-servant, and that man-servant was of her own kind. She said to my friend, 'And to you, long life!' She sat by the fire, and he gave her coffee, and she drank, and the man-servant stood in the shadows behind them.

"'Have you forgotten me?' she said, and my friend said, 'No.' They looked at each other, and she said, 'Am I not

The plateau of Thethis. Padre Marjan's church, school, and house are all visible.

beautiful ?' And he said, 'Yes.' Then she leaned close to him and said, 'Will you marry me ?' And he said, 'No.'

"When he said that, she rose, and she was more beautiful angry than she had been before. 'Come with me,' she said. 'My father wishes to see you.'

"He said, 'What have I to do with your father ?'

"She said, 'Come with me !'

"My friend did not know why he went, or how he went, or where he went. They came to a place in the mountains, but it was a strange place, and strange mountains—my friend could not describe that place. There were trees that were alive ; it was all my friend could say. There were many souls of trees about him, and they were Ora, and among them was their King, who is the King of the Ora. He stood before the King of the Ora.

"The King looked at him and said, 'Will you marry my daughter ?' And he said, 'No.'

Roc Perolli.

"The King said to him, 'My daughter has seen you. My daughter wishes to be your wife. She will be a good wife to you. She will bring you great happiness. She is my daughter, a lady Ora.'

"My friend said, 'I thank you. Your daughter is very beautiful and very good. But I do not wish to marry.'

"The King of the Ora said, 'If you will marry my daughter you will have all the heart desires. I will make you rich in the things that men call riches in the Land of the Eagle.'

"My friend said, 'I am a poor man. I am not a Bey of the south, of the land of the Toshk ; I am a Gheg, a man of the mountains. All that I need I earn with my hands, and that is enough. I do not wish to marry.'

"Then the King of the Ora rose. He was not angry ; but he looked very terrible. He said, 'Marry my daughter.'

"And my friend married his lady daughter."

The man of Ipek seemed to think that the story was ended,

but I, who had been scribbling all this down in my notebook, hidden in the shadow of Rexh, as Perolli translated it to me paragraph by paragraph, did not agree with him at all. "What happened?" I wanted to know.

"Nothing happened. His family came to the empty house and found him gone, leaving his gun on the wall and the empty coffee cup by the dead ashes of the fire. They were very much afraid. My friend had not told any man but me about the visit of the Ora three years before, and I said nothing. Some days passed, and no one knew where he had gone. Then he came back, and brought with him his wife, the Ora."

The rest I got by questions.

"No one could see her except my friend," said the man of Ipek. "No one but he ever saw her. He built himself a beautiful house; there were rugs in it, and tables of carved wood and bowls of copper and silver—all things that are beautiful. Cigarette holders of amber and silver with jewelled bowls, and sashes and turbans of silk, and cushions of silk, and beautiful jars for bringing water from the springs. All kinds of rich and beautiful things, and always great quantities of delicate and rich foods. The men of Ipek remember that house well.

"Yes; my friend is dead now. He lived in happiness with his wife for twenty years, and they had children whom he loved. But only he could see them, for to others they were invisible, like his wife. I have been in his house many times when she was there, but I never saw her. Others say they have seen strange things in that house; they have seen things moved by hands they could not see. But I never saw that. Only I know that my friend was happy with his wife and children. She was a lady Ora, and kept his house well. The gipsy Ora are dirty folk, but the lady Ora love cleanliness and order. Everyone respected my friend and his lady wife. Whenever he entered a village, all guns were fired in his honour, for men said, 'The man who married a lady Ora is coming into the village.' Oh, it was all very well known in Ipek, among the people of my tribe who are now slaves to the cursed Serbs.

"When he died, no doubt she went back to her own people, taking their children with her. His family came to take back his house and they found all manner of beautiful things, but no money. No money anywhere."

"What do you think of it?" I said to Betsy. "Do you believe—Great Scott! Of course it isn't true! Men don't marry tree-spirits. It's absurd."

"There's some natural explanation," said Alex. "The man went away for some reason—perhaps he had found some of the treasure they say is buried in these mountains—and when he came back he invented the story to account for it."

"But he had told this man about seeing the Ora, three years earlier."

"Well, they're a very patient people. Perhaps he waited three years after he found the treasure before he dug it up."

"I should say they are patient!" cried Betsy. "Perolli, if you don't tell them we are simply dying of hunger, I will! It's almost two o'clock in the morning. Do they think we are made of cast-iron? I want something to eat, and I want to go to sleep. Do they intend to talk until morning?"

"It is the custom, when strangers come, to talk to them," said Perolli severely. "Their only way of hearing news, and their only entertainment, is talking to guests. If you want to be rude about eating and sleeping, go ahead. *I* won't."

"Oh, all right," Betsy relented sadly. "Perolli, do you believe in Ora?"

"Well—do you believe in heaven and hell, and God and the devil? There are lots of things in the world that you can't see or touch. I don't know—— Of course I don't believe in Ora!"

"But there was that sound we heard. I never heard anything like it before. Perolli, you said it was an Ora."

He looked worried. "I meant, whatever it was, it is what these people call an Ora."

We were interrupted by Cheremi, who approached, knelt mysteriously by Perolli's side, and whispered. Perolli turned to us. "Our dinner is delayed," he said, "because they can find nothing to give to Rexh. They have only pork in the house, and they have sent through all the village and cannot find any eggs or goats' meat. A boy has gone now over the mountains to the next village, to get something they can offer a Mohammedan. You see, their flocks were destroyed when the Serbs retreated through here, and if they kill one of the two sheep for us, it means losing the lambs next year."

"But, Miss Cleveland, I can eat cornbread. That is all I need," said Rexh earnestly.

"We can't tell them that now. We should have thought of it sooner," said Perolli. "We must wait at least until the boy comes back."

"Oh, my sainted grandmother!" cried poor Betsy. "Aren't we going to have any dinner at all till breakfast-time?"

But at last, when we had almost given up hope, dinner appeared. It was exactly half past two in the morning!

Most of the children—they had had no supper at all, so far as we could determine—were going to sleep, collapsing in soft little heaps where they sat beside the fire. Various women of the household lifted them tenderly, carried them to the farther corner of the house, near the goats, and laid them in a row on the floor. There, covered head and

"All the villagers who had come in to see us gathered around this second table."

foot with heavy, tucked-in blankets, they continued to sleep.

Meantime the table was brought for us. It was a large round piece of wood, raised on little legs perhaps five inches from the floor. We sat about it, comfortably cross-legged on our blankets, and before each of us was laid a large chunk of corn-bread broken from the flat loaf. In the centre of the table was set a wooden bowl filled with pieces of pork.

"Don't!" said Perolli quickly, restraining our famished gestures. "In Albania it is not good manners to be eager to eat." So we sat wretched for some moments, savouring the delicious odour of food that we must not touch, and politely making conversation with our hosts, who still sprawled in graceful attitudes about the fire. Then, with slow and indifferent movements, we fished out bits of the meat with our fingers and ate.

It was delicious—lean meat, stripped of every scrap of fat, and broiled on sticks over a wood fire. We ate eagerly, biting first the meat, then a morsel of corn-bread, coarse, made without leavening, but sweet and nutty. The smallest crumb of it must not be scattered on table or floor; when one fell, Perolli instructed us to pick it up and kiss it. We should also have made the sign of the cross, for bread is sacred in these mountains. Since we were not Catholics, however, that omission might be overlooked. But we must pick up the crumb and kiss it; to have ignored it would have caused scandal.

"In Albania," said Perolli, "it is etiquette to leave a great deal of the food." And while we were still starving, after fourteen hours of hunger, he ordered the dish away.

After that, another wooden bowl filled with cubes of the fat pork, fried crisp. Rexh sitting a little apart, soberly ate his piece of corn-bread, for not even in the next village had the messenger been able to find eggs or goats' meat.

When this second course was removed, fresh water was again brought to wash our hands, while the table was removed to a little distance. Then I saw why it was courteous to leave food, for all the villagers who had come in to see us gathered around this second table. When they had finished and all had washed their hands—it was now past three in the morning—the table was again moved, and the family ate, men and women together, chatting and daintily dipping into the common dish.

"Do you think, Perolli," said Betsy, "that we could go to bed now?" And she looked enviously at Alex, who sat upright, but fast asleep.

"Oh, surely!" said Perolli. "They'll understand that you're tired." And he explained this to our hosts, who nodded, smiling. So Cheremi and Rexh spread our blankets more smoothly on the floor, and we lay down in a row, our heads on our saddle-bags, and pulled another blanket over us.

For a time the others sat by the fire and talked; one roasted coffee over the coals in a long-handled pan, and then ground it in a cylinder of brass. The smell of it and the sound of grinding kept coming through my daze of fatigue. Then one by one they lay down, covering their heads with blankets; the fire died to a fading glow; there was no sound except the incessant tinkling of the goats' bells, and the crunching and tearing of the dried oak-branches which they munched.

"My first night in a native Albanian house!" I thought, and the next instant, it seemed to me, I started awake. The room was full of movement and talk. It was still dark, but in the farther corner a grey, slanting bar of light came through the open door; smoke curled and twisted in it. The fire was blazing; near it a man knelt, making coffee. All around him stood others, twisting tighter their long coloured sashes; the rifles on their backs pointed upwards at every angle. Then I saw the goats and sheep going out one by one. A boy followed them, rifle on back and staff in hand, and I realized that it was morning.

(To be continued.)

Three Asses *in the* Pyrenees

A JOYOUS JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE.

V.

No lover of real humour should miss this delightful narrative. Recently returned from a big game expedition to Central Africa, utterly bored with the "everything-supplied-by-the-stores" atmosphere that surrounds the modern traveller, the Author yearned to test his wife's theory that romance and adventure still linger in the by-ways of old Europe for those who seek them diligently. Her idea was to go on tramp with a donkey-cart, camping out at night, and avoiding all such latter-day luxuries as hotels, trains, and motor-cars. Finally Mr. Walmsley came to us, and we commissioned him, with his wife and the donkey, to wander through the Pyrenees, writing up his experiences exclusively for THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE. His breezy account of the trials and tribulations of the "Three Asses" will amuse our readers for months to come.

By

Leo Walmsley

M.C., F.R.G.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

MADAME, the *aubergiste*, knocked at our door shortly after dawn and, on my opening it, brought in *café au lait*, rolls and butter.

"*Bonjour*, Monsieur and Madame," she said cheerfully. "You have slept well?"

I pointed to the bed, the dead rat, and the chairs on which we had spent our night.

"We have *not* slept well," I assured her. "The beds were already occupied. Fond though we are of company, we prefer it to be of our own choosing."

She expressed her surprise. Never before, she told us, had she had complaints concerning her best beds. The priests, the holy men——

"Did you catch one, then?" she questioned incredulously. "One would like evidence. It is a most serious matter. You are sure? Quite sure?"

"Madame," I answered stiffly, "I am a naturalist. If I don't know a—well, one of those—when I see it—— Besides, there was more than one. There was also the rat, and cockroaches. We had an interesting night, certainly—a sporting one, if you like. But don't ask me if we slept well. I can't stand it."

The coffee, however, was excellent, and the day was fine. We packed up, settled our account, and walked round to the stable. Apparently Blanchette had fared far better

than her master and mistress. She was busy with a mighty bunch of sweet hay, and kicked out savagely when I loosened her moorings and made signs that we wished to take the road once more.

We had to wait until she had finished the hay; then we bustled her into her harness, and with our hostess and two of the merchants waving *bon voyage*, we set out for Mauleon, now, according to the map, only a dozen miles away.

Tired though we were, we enjoyed the first hour on the road, for the sun had not yet taken the sharpness from the air, and the countryside looked bright and fresh after the night's rain. One would have to travel far to find a more colourful landscape than that which spread before us. Red-roofed white cottages gleamed in a foreground of emerald maize and yellow corn. Dark poplars and oaks made harmony with the heaving brown heathlands of the middle distance; and beyond, clear-cut against a pale turquoise sky, the wild mountain-tops gave a splendid complement of blue and purple.

Small wonder that the folk of this country sing from morning till night! There is an infective joyousness in the very breadth and freedom of it. The soil is as fertile as that of a tropical forest. The climate is warm and bountiful of rain, yet there is none of the enervating softness of Spain and Italy.

But above all, I think, it is the ceaseless industry of these people which makes them so happy. They have no time for worrying. They are up at dawn and asleep at dark. Their pastimes are as simple and satisfying as their toil. The village *café* where they drink a little soul-warming wine and talk and sing; the fives-court and skittle alley —these provide their only daily relaxation in the busy spring and summer. In winter, I believe, they dance in the barns, to music as old and wild as their hills. If happiness is the goal of human desire, and I believe it is, it makes one wonder if the Basques, in spite of their simplicity, have not reached a higher stage than we have.

For two miles or so we travelled along the back of a hill; then we dipped into a valley, and started up its farther slope. Here, at the first real work of the morning, Blanchette was taken ill. She stopped suddenly, arched her back like a cat's, threw her head forward, closed her eyes in an ecstasy of pain, and started to cough in such a manner as to make me fear for her life.

Billy diagnosed dyspepsia. She had once lived on a farm and had seen a horse taken in the same way.

"We ought to give her something," she said. "She'll strain her heart if she doesn't stop. Undo the harness."

I unharnessed her, but apart from freeing her vicious hind legs, it brought no relief.

"What on earth can we do?" I cried in alarm. "I feel I ought to pat her back, but —but there's so much of it. Haven't we got anything?"

We had. Somewhere in the kit-bag Billy found a bottle of somebody's somethingated magnesia. It seemed that an aunt had given it to her as a farewell present.

"Instant relief in five minutes," she cried. "Get some water."

I cleared out one of the biscuit tins and ran back to the stream to fill it. Then we carefully measured what we concluded to be the right dose for a sick ass, and held the tin temptingly below Blanchette's nose. She stopped coughing and sniffed suspiciously. Then she drank.

She liked it. She drank it to the dregs and then, with a final spasm which ended in throaty hee-haws, she shook herself and became normal.

We did not go on, however, but pulled the cart well in from the road, found a shady tree, lay down on our blankets, and went to sleep.

Mauleon is a pleasant little town full of quaint streets and buildings, and with a roaring mountain torrent—the Saison—tearing incessantly at its foundations. Heavy rain made us take sanctuary in the Hotel Bidegain, and for two whole days we stayed there chafing impatiently at the delay, and —what to me was a more vital matter— the expense. The third day, however, broke clear and sunny and we made an early start for Tardets and the Gave de Mauleon, where, in the late afternoon, we found a camping-ground on the bank of the Saison.

"Billy," I said enthusiastically, when we had finished pitching the tent, "we'll stay here a week. This will be a permanent camp. I can write here. I can fish in the river. We can climb a peak or two. We shall live an ideal life. I am going to begin by taking a dip. Will you join me?"

She replied that she preferred to sleep, and that, in any case, it wasn't nice to bathe without a proper costume.

"Good gracious!" I cried, scornfully, "this is not Brighton! One can bathe here as Nature intended one to bathe. Costumes? Oh, you conventionalists! Could anything be more ideal—the shadow of the eternal hills, a clean running river, air one can really breathe, a screen of trees, and water-bent rushes? Sleep, my dear girl; but think what you'll miss!"

If I'd known what she *was* going to miss, perhaps I should have slept, too. But I didn't.

I ran down to the river bank, found a suitable spot where the water curved into a little bay, undressed, and dived in. The last river I had dived in was the River Niger, three months before, and there was a noteworthy difference in the temperature. Perhaps it was that which made me strike

"I bounded off like a startled hare."

out more vigorously than caution would have dictated, for the stream was swift and powerful; and I was in the middle before I had really recovered my breath from the shock of the cold. Then I tried to swim back.

It was impossible!

Already I was yards from my clothes, and the stream, narrowing between two cliffs, boiled so that it was all I could do to keep my head above water.

I thrust downwards with my hands, therefore, and yielded to the current. The cliffs extended for a hundred yards; then they gave way to low wooded banks and finally to fields running down to the river, which broadened to a fairly shallow reach. I saw all this but dimly, for my eyes were full of cold water. If they had not been so affected they might have noted something else—a group of young women washing clothes on the left side of the reach. Like a sea-god I rose from the water immediately in front of them and stood rubbing my eyes. . . .

The effect was intensely dramatic, so much so that none of us stirred or spoke for several seconds. Then came screams and a chorus of gasps—one of them my own. I dropped like a shot duck into the water and swam frantically for the opposite shore.

Gaining the shallows, I stopped. In spite of the cold, I was blushing so hotly that I tingled from head to toe. Without rising I took a swift glance back. The women had fled, leaving their washing on the rocks.

Dare I?

I saw no other solution.

I swam back, crawled like an alligator along the sand and made a grab at the nearest garment. I had no time to see what it was. I put it between my teeth and crossed over close to the right bank. Then, under a convenient alder, I examined my prize. It was a petticoat, coloured like a highlander's kilt. I put it on and swung myself up on to the bank.

The road, I remembered, ran parallel to the river. A swift reconnaissance showed that in order to reach my clothes I must gain it, for a maze of gorse and briar covered the top of the cliffs and made a barrier that no man clad as I could conveniently negotiate. Between me and the road was a hayfield. On the left was a high thorn fence, running roadwards, but meandering so that it afforded abundant cover. A large horse-fly, alighting on my back, stung me to action.

I stole stealthily along the hedge. Meanwhile the horsefly was joined by several others. Mosquitoes also arrived, scenting a delectable meal; and if anything else was necessary to stimulate my progress it was the sound of feminine voices speaking angrily across the river. The loss of the petticoat had been discovered!

Thank Heaven! I had only twenty yards to go. The hedge curved to the left. I decided to leave its shelter and make a dash for freedom. I stopped and listened intently, then, crouching for a running start—

"Qu'est ce que c'est alors?"

My heart stopped beating.

It was a woman's voice, and the speaker was but a dozen feet away from me, hidden by the curving hedge.

In the medly of answering voices from across the river, I caught the words "thief" and "naked man." The blood mounted to my cheeks. I stepped back into the hedge, and forced my way painfully into obscurity — a very painful obscurity, too. The hedge, as I have said, was composed of thorns, but there were also thistles and a particularly vicious species of nettle.

The woman laughed—and to my horror I heard her moving nearer.

"A naked man?" she echoed. "But that must be a sight to see! What has he stolen, then?"

Judging by the answers, I must have stolen a complete wardrobe. I only wished to heaven I had, for the petticoat gave a most inadequate protection. The horseflies and mosquitoes had returned to the attack, and I felt I should soon be eaten alive.

The woman—I cursed her savagely—came to a stop not six feet from my hiding place. She was raking hay. I could see her face, distorted with humour. Evidently she was vastly tickled, for she kept repeating to herself: "A naked man!" as though it were the daintiest joke she had ever heard.

Personally, I could see no humour in the situation. My legs, my back, and my arms smarted as though I had been drenched in boiling oil. The horseflies' bites were red-hot needles in my flesh. Yet for the life of me I dare not move.

An Englishman in a stolen petticoat! I might be captured, arrested, brought up before the local court. It would appear in the papers! Billy would have to give evidence! The British Consul would be called in!

The woman, incredulous at first, was now evidently convinced, and to my unbounded relief, she suddenly flung down her rake and hastened towards the river edge. That was my chance! I sprang up from my lair, loossened a wreath of bramble from my neck, and with one hand feverishly holding the petticoat about my waist, made a mad sprint for the road.

I was seen at once; I could tell that by a hoarse shriek from my late neighbour. But I did not look round. Luckily there was no hedge to negotiate, only a stone wall. I scrambled over it, and found myself in the road-ditch. But alas! I was not alone. A trap containing a farmer and two females was approaching from the direction of the camp; a haycart with more females was coming the opposite way. For half a minute I stood paralysed, scarcely aware that my legs were in a bunch of nettles and that a

score of horseflies were thrusting needles in my back.

Then my presence of mind returned. I became conscious of one all-pervading desire —to get back to camp by the shortest possible route in the shortest possible time; and if all the ladies of the Pyrenees had been gathered on that road they would not have baulked me of my desire.

I could not run, for the road was under repair, and covered with cruel stones. But I girded up my solitary garment, and with my head well up, and a devil-may-care look upon my countenance, stepped up from the ditch and set off for camp.

The trap was upon me almost instantly, and as ill-luck would have it, my left foot encountered a thorn at that precise moment. The trap stopped; *I* stopped. The farmer stared at me open-mouthed; the ladies stared at the mountains. I felt an instinctive admiration for their choice. Had I been certain that Lady Godiva was a saint I should have invoked a blessing upon their heads.

"It is a glorious evening," I remarked nonchalantly, leaning my body against the trap wheel and making an effort to unsheath the thorn from my foot. "The mountains are very beautiful."

The farmer, a nasty red-faced man, looked at me suspiciously.

"You are English, yes?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered. "I am English. I have been swimming in the river. An—an accident. This garment, as you see——"

He leered.

"It is most *drôle*. It is yours, then?"

The haycart had now drawn up a dozen yards away, and I regret to say that the females belonging to it were scarcely as discreet as those of the trap. They were giggling loudly, and making very embarassing remarks.

"The garment is *not* my own," I answered the farmer. "It is not, as you have perhaps observed, a masculine garment. Nor is the colour one which I would willingly choose to blend with——"

At that moment the haymaking woman put her head over the wall and croaked:—

"He is a thief, that man. He has stolen the clothing from the women across the river. Please to stop him!"

The farmer looked at her quickly, looked at me, and then grasped the stock of his whip.

But the thorn was out, and I was in no humour for staying. The road beyond the trap was clear, the surface kinder. I bounded off like a startled hare, reached the hill, and with my garment flapping wildly, tore down to the camp.

"Billy," I shouted, "open the tent—quick, quick!"

The tent was opened. Billy came out, rubbed the sleep from her eyes, stared at me in blank amazement—and forthwith went off into hysterics!

It was the last straw.

A woman who can stand—nay, double up with laughter at the sight of her own husband racked with agony, as I was then, is—well, I told her.

"But—where—*where* did you get it?" she gasped, idiotically. "Where are your clothes?"

"You'll be ill if you don't stop," I interrupted savagely, seizing my Burberry and throwing the hateful petticoat from me. "Go out and get my clothes. Go and explain. The police will be here shortly—and it's all your fault. Going to sleep—going to sleep, when—when——"

Words failed me. I crept into the tent and wept.

The hire of that petticoat cost me twenty francs. Its owner maintained she had paid a hundred for it, and she said she would never feel quite the same about it, now that it had been seen by all her neighbours. I bargained with her from inside the tent. Her friends were with her, and all but she seemed greatly amused. Billy gave her the money, and I shouted to them that I was ill and would be glad if they would now go away. Unfortunately they had seen Blanchette, and they wished to know more about us.

"Give her to them," I shouted to my wife. "Let them take her away. Give them the trap—everything. Ask them where the nearest station is."

They did disperse at last, and then Billy came into the tent and helped me to extract the remainder of my thorns, and to ease the pain of the nettles and insect bites with ammonia. Then I dressed rapidly.

"Come on," I said, "we're going on."

"But, darling," she protested, "it's nearly dark. We can't—it's absurd."

For answer I struck the tent, heaped it up, and threw it into the trap. Then I struck Blanchette, and pushed her between the shafts. She bit my hand. I struck her again and harnessed her. Ten minutes later we had shaken the dust of that hateful spot from our feet.

We had not gone far before we found a more suitable camping ground—a copse of oak between the river and the road. Superb mountains hemmed us in on the north, east, and west; the ceaseless thunder of the river completed an atmosphere of primitive solitude. Here, indeed, a man might forget —even forget petticoats.

It was quite dark by the time the tent was erected, and a glorious fire of drifted pine-logs and the whiff of frizzling bacon and eggs brought back my good humour. After all, that adventure of the borrowed bathing dress *had* been quite funny in a way. Now that it was over, now that we had put a mile between us and the women, I could even

afford to laugh at it myself. It was dashed funny—dashed.

Adventures were certainly crowding in upon us. Billy had been quite right in her theory that we should find more adventures in the Pyrenees than in Central Africa.

In fact, I was almost beginning to wish we *were* in Central Africa.

"I wonder if anything will happen to-night," said Billy, taking out the banjo. "I have an extraordinary premonition that something will. The mountains look so black and forbidding. I wish, I wish——"

"Wish you were back at the *auberge?*" I interrupted cheerfully. "Longing for the beds the holy men slept in? Thirsting for another nocturnal rat hunt? Darling, do try and curb these psychic emotions of yours! We couldn't be in a more delightful spot. The weather promises fine, there are no humans to disturb us, no stag beetles. You'll sleep like anything. *I* shall, anyway. I'm just longing to lie down."

She put back the banjo, and huddled up closer to my side.

"Forgive me for being so queer," she said, "I just can't help it. It's the darkness, the solitude, the roar of the river. I—I wonder if people are ever drowned in the river? I can imagine corpses floating down in the dark——"

She stopped suddenly as Blanchette emitted a terrific hee-haw. I felt her shiver; I shivered myself. I don't know why.

"Do you think animals feel nervous about the dark?" she went on. "Do you think Blanchette's psychic——?"

"Nonsense," I said. "She's got dyspepsia again, I expect. Good gracious! A psychic donkey!"

"I know I sha'n't sleep a wink, anyway," replied Billy. "Not a wink."

It was just like Billy to talk like that before bedtime. She had done so before, and I made no mistake when I guessed what the result would be. An hour later she was fast asleep, and I as wide awake and sleepless as though I had dined on lobster mayonnaise, roast goose, and suet pudding. My nettle stings and insect-bites, also, were not conducive to slumber.

Blanchette seemed unusually restive. We had tethered her to the trap ten yards away from the camp, and she pawed the ground incessantly.

After lying in agony for a couple of hours or so, I got up and, sitting by the fire, tried to read.

Presently, tiring of the book, I heaped more logs upon the fire and stole back to the tent for the ammonia. Billy slept, with a smile of sweet content upon her face. For a minute I battled with a fiendish desire to put the ammonia bottle to her nostrils; then I returned to the fire and started to rub my bites and stings.

I was engaged in this cheerful operation when Blanchette gave another terrific hee-haw, long and wailing. It is no exaggeration to say my hair rose at the sound of it. But I got up, for all that, and leaden-footed moved towards her.

"B—Blanchette," I shouted sternly, and yet with chattering teeth. "Wha—what's the matter?" I continued, getting confidence in the sound of my own voice. "What's the matter, then—Whoa!"

I could see her now, her body looming white against the trees, and her eyes glowing ghoulishly. Then, suddenly, I saw something else—*a human figure moving warily towards me!*

I have never experienced such a moment of absolute terror as I did then; for while the figure was undoubtedly that of a man, it made no sound, but approached with the sinister silence of a ghost.

I would have taken to my heels—I confess it frankly—had I possessed the necessary command of them, and I would have shouted aloud had my vocal cords been mine to control. But as it was, I simply stood and stared, until Blanchette, bolder than I, gave way to her feelings in one sustained and awful howl.

As the last echo of it died away the figure stopped. Then, to my inexpressible relief, I heard a human voice, speaking in broken English:—

"Mister—you Inglessi? Isa that your fire there?"

"Who are you?" I answered.

"I am come froma Spain. I am a sailor. I am lost. I see your fire. Won't I come along with you, mate?"

I stepped back towards the fire, and he followed me as silently as he had moved before. The light showed him to be a tall, swarthy man, about forty years of age, with big white teeth, a black moustache, and brown eyes that flashed like a savage animal's. His shirt, wide-open at the neck, revealed a hairy chest. His trousers were tattered; his feet were bare, which explained his silent walk. He wore no hat. On his back was a bulky rucksac of woven grass, and a long parcel was slung across his shoulders.

But the chief impression this astonishing-looking stranger gave me was that he was a hunted man. You saw it in his eyes, in the nervous quivering of his lips, in his manner of speech. A man whose intentions are honest does not lurk in the vicinity of a camp by night, and I became suspicious.

Without waiting to be asked, the newcomer flung himself down by the fire and stretched out his hands to the flame.

"Very cold, mate. You notta gotta anything to eat?"

I pointed to a roll of bread lying by the cooking gear. He pounced upon it and began to eat ravenously.

"You're lost, eh?" I questioned.

"Oh, yes," he answered with a wolfish

"There suddenly came from the road the sound of a human voice. The sailor gave a lightning glance in that direction."

grin. "I hava come from Barcelona. No good there for get ship. I go to Bordeaux. What you a-doing here, mate? You tourista?"

Billy called to me at that moment.

I shouted to her to come out. She came, looking very scared. The man got up and bowed.

"This gentleman comes from the same place as the nuts," I explained. "I should say he had lots of interesting things to tell us—or he would have, if he could spare the time. Where do you sleep?" I added suggestively, turning to him. He laughed.

"That's all the same to me, mate. Only I am vera, vera hungry. You gotta anything else to eat? I have come vera long way."

I found him a tin of bully beef, and while he ate, he talked freely. He had sailed in many English ships, he said, the last being a P. and O. He had also been a soldier and had served in Morocco. That was not a pleasant country to fight in. He had been wounded, and he exhibited a long weal on his arm which he said had been made by a Moorish spear. For a year now he had been out of a ship. Had tramped from Marseilles to Barcelona, and was now on his way to Bordeaux, where he had hopes of joining a South American steamer.

"Billy" does some cooking.

He was certainly the most picturesque tramp I have ever seen, and the sight of him sitting there before the fire, the light flashing on his perfect teeth and dancing in his eyes, is one I shall never forget. Yet he did not seem at ease. Occasionally he would pause and stare out into the darkness listening intently. The sudden pawing of Blanchette caused him to leap to his feet and stand with shoulders hunched, as though he were about to spring upon someone. I noticed, too, that he did not take the rucksac nor the parcel from his back, although he was obviously very tired.

He talked to us for upwards of an hour of his adventures ashore and afloat, and then a quick change in his manner revived my early fears. He leaned over towards me, touched me lightly on the arm, and spoke with the oily accents of the professional beggar.

"Mister, I ama very poor. You are a gentleman. Please give me a little money for food to-morrow. I must getta on now. You will be kind?"

I shook my head.

He laughed.

"Oha, yes. You will giva leedle money. Just a leedle money."

In spite of his smile, I had an instinctive feeling that he was sizing me up, and I would have given a good deal to have had a pistol in my pocket, or even a trusty walking-stick close handy. As it was, I was entirely unarmed, and the man was twice my weight.

"I haven't got any money," I said, holding his eyes with mine. "I have given you food. Isn't that enough? You had better go——"

I rose to my feet. Billy came to my side.

He got up, too, and came slowly forward.

"Oha, just a leedle money. Twenty francs—just——"

He never finished the sentence, for there suddenly came from the road the sound of a human voice. The sailor gave a lightning glance in that direction, turned to the opposite one, listened intently, and then, without a word, leapt off into the darkness.

A moment later we heard a splash, and simultaneously two uniformed men stepped out of the gloom near the trap and came towards us. They carried automatic pistols in their hands and looked very businesslike.

"I am an officer of the *douane* (Customs)," one of them said. "You are an English tourist?" I nodded. "You have seen a man? He stopped here?"

We explained what had happened. The officer gave an order to his companion and shouted up to the road, where apparently there were other men. Then he demanded my passport and examined it quickly.

"Very good," he said. "But you must be careful when sleeping so far from the villages. *Bon soir*, Monsieur, Madame."

"But the man you seek," I asked. "What is it he has done?"

"He is a smuggler and a thief from Jaca, across the border—a desperate character. I am glad there are very few like him left nowadays. Your donkey? Ah! he would have had that! As it is, I think we shall have him before dawn. But one never knows. He is clever."

He bade us good-night again and we were alone.

"Billy," I said, "you ought to be a medium!"

(To be continued.)

THE TOBACCO SMUGGLERS OF THE BELGIAN BORDER

by

J. Sutton-Paterson

The smuggling of tobacco across the Franco-Belgian frontier is a very old business; the population of whole villages engages in it heart and soul, using all sorts of ingenious devices to outwit the officials. Nowadays high-powered motor-cars figure prominently in contraband-running, the drivers cutting their way through barriers and frequently fighting desperate pistol duels with the Customs men. Mr. Sutton-Paterson went to the border on our behalf to investigate the state of affairs, and here describes some of the things he saw and heard.

"SMUGGLING," said Mark Twain, "is the queen of all parlour games." There would seem to be considerable truth in the statement, for probably at no time has this particular crime been more indulged in than at the present moment. Staid men of business go all the way to Berlin to buy a few diamonds just a little cheaper than in England, and then return gloriously with them at the risk of at least five years' imprisonment. Obviously it is not the gain that attracts them. No; it is the lure of the forbidden, giving the same unholy glee that a schoolboy knows when he has managed to throw a stone through the headmaster's window. They go home and talk of their daring to a group of frankly incredulous friends, and everyone is utterly contented.

Only a week ago I heard of an elderly lady who travelled nearly across Europe with her body tightly rolled in some hundreds of yards of costly Russian lace. The discomfort must have been excruciating, and when she arrived at Calais she gave in. "I can't stand this another minute," she said. "If they lock me up, very well, then, they lock me up; and that's all there is to it." And she immediately began unrolling her lace.

"Madame, why trouble yourself?" said the obliging Customs official; "there has been no duty on that sort of lace for the last eight months or more. You can take as much as you fancy into England with all the pleasure in the world!" What the good woman did, I cannot imagine. Fainted in the proper early Victorian manner, let us hope.

This sort of contraband-running is trivial, but there is a particularly business-like branch of the business worked across the French and Belgian frontiers, where immense quantities of raw tobacco are smuggled with sufficient cleverness over the boundary line. This is by no means a new development, for in the fourteenth or fifteenth century a contemporary historian tells us that a great deal of smuggling went on in this way. He states cheerfully that the officials in charge of what formed the Customs of those days "did assist and help right joyously when given certain moneys." This is by no means the case to-day, for the men whose duty it is to arrest these smugglers are a most conscientious set of fellows, with intelligence well above the average—and it needs to be!

Since the cessation of the War this smuggling has re-commenced, and is now at its height as regards daring and cunning. Most of the tobacco is taken across the frontier in fast, high-powered motor-cars. One of these was found to be a Mercédès of 80–110 horse-power, fitted at the rear with a dummy petrol-tank, the real reservoir being snugly placed under the driver's seat. The men said that it was altogether an excellent plan, and drew the fire of the Customs' officials in a most satisfactory manner. When the car was eventually captured it was found to contain over half a ton of crude tobacco, and the dummy petrol tank had been shot through in no fewer than thirty-five places—a striking testimonial to the marksmanship of the Customs men. It was stated that this car usually travelled at a speed of between ninety and a hundred kilometres an hour. I was allowed to have a run in the car, and from my little experience of motor-racing at

Brooklands I can most certainly say that she was capable of anything up to ninety-five miles an hour.

One car in particular has long baffled the men whose duty it is to stop it. It usually comes through about midnight, they say, and has no one at the wheel! The body-work is rather high, they tell me, but in spite of that they can see the wheel quite plainly in the moonlight as the thing passes them.

Some of them are inclined to treat the matter as savouring of the supernatural, but my own idea is that another wheel has been constructed lower down the column, fixed in such a position that the chauffeur can drive whilst lying down, having perhaps an arrangement of mirrors fitted in the "dash" to enable him to see where he is going. The speed of this car is much lower than that of the others, which have visible drivers—a fact that seems to support my theory. In this case solid tyres are used, and so it is useless to fire at the wheels in the hope of throwing the steering out. A barrier of barbed wire and iron fences was erected at one point, but the mysterious automobile cut through it as easily as a military observation-car would have done. This seems to prove that the vehicle is armoured in some way, or else has what is called by the French a *coupe fer* attached in front, as so often used during the War. In all probability this mysterious smuggler is nothing more or less than an old army car, three or four of which were sold after the armistice to people whose names and addresses subsequently proved to be false.

The ruses adopted by the smugglers are most ingenious. On one occasion in 1914 a funeral party passed the frontier. The hearse contained a coffin covered with flowers, and a train of perhaps half-a-dozen shabbily-dressed mourners followed, each weeping as he felt moved. At the end of the procession was a small boy who showed his grief by such heartbreaking yells and horrifying grimaces that the watchers decided his sorrow was just a trifle too deep to be genuine. At times he would look cheerfully at his mother as though to say: "Well, what d'you think of *that* for an effort?"

Now the members of the *douane* are all kind-hearted fellows. They hate to see other people overwhelmed with sorrow, but really the wails of this infant seemed a trifle too convincing; he wept with an enthusiasm that suggested that he had some reward in sight. They therefore arrested the funeral intact.

The lid of the coffin was removed with all reverence, and it was found to contain about half a ton of perfectly good tobacco. The officers turned to say a few words to the mourners—but most of them seemed to have vanished. The driver of the hearse, however, remained faithful to his post and eventually they helped him to Mother Earth, where he subsided in an untidy heap and forgot his sorrow sufficiently to burst into the opening bars of *La Marseillaise*. The dear fellow was so drunk that he had no idea of where he was going or what he carried behind him! Several of the "mourners" were caught a few days after, and soon had a really solid cause for grief, for they all went to prison for two years for their ingenuity.

About a month after this a gentleman of the horse-killing profession essayed to pass the frontier with the dead body of a faithful donkey on his cart. He wore his usual unconcerned air, and the feet of the dead "moke" stuck out behind in the approved manner, but the officer-in-charge—suspicious person!—had his doubts about the cargo and so halted the man. Sad to say, they cut the donkey open—that is, as far as they could, for the knife soon had to be exchanged for the tin-opener! The donkey was merely a nicely-cured skin; *his stomach was made of tin plate!* Evidently, too, he had fed on good *caporal* tobacco, and driver and donkey were promptly put under lock and key to await their trial.

One evening an old and venerable lady carrying a basket spoke to the sentry on duty. "Young man," she said, tremulously, "to-morrow night I'm a-goin' to bring a pound or two of tobacco through for my old man. It'll be all right, I suppose?"

"We'll see what can be done," said the sentry diplomatically, and with a hitch of her basket the old lady departed towards France.

The next night she was very naturally arrested, but strange to say not an atom of tobacco was to be found on her. The dear old soul looked remarkably innocent. "Where is that tobacco you talked about?" inquired the captain.

"Bless you!" replied the dame, "you ain't half sharp enough. Why, I had it in my basket last night when I was a-talkin' to this 'ere young man."

Any man wearing a top-hat is promptly examined. A wedding of great importance once crossed the frontier—and all the gentlemen, it was discovered later, had their top-hats full of the finest shag! This has been a lesson to the Customs, and now they doubt all parades of this kind.

One or two drunken Frenchmen have been arrested in Belgian villages quite close to the frontier and conveyed to a French police station over the line in the custody of a gendarme. As the matter is in the hands of the law, of course, the Customs people do not interfere—and this gave the smugglers an idea. Sometimes even the gendarme has been a suitably-dressed friend of the "drunkard," and also carried his share of the contraband weed!

Even if the drunken gentleman is arrested by a *real* police officer, he is always fairly sober by the time the police station is reached, and after paying a fine of perhaps twenty

Customs officers with two captured smugglers. The gentleman on the right has rather overdone the business of padding himself with tobacco.

francs, he is allowed to go on his way rejoicing—with the tobacco or cigars he has brought through with him.

One afternoon a lad was seen pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with manure past the station. He looked innocent enough, but just as he passed the post, the wheel unfortunately came to pieces and his cargo was scattered on the ground. One or two of the officers laughed and went towards the lad to help him. No sooner did he see them approaching, however, than he gave one frightened look at them and then took to his heels with all the speed he possessed. It was as they immediately suspected—two or three inches of manure, a sheet of tin, and under that seventy or eighty pounds of tobacco.

The accordion of a wandering musician, the camera of the loudly-dressed "American" tourist, and even the walking-stick of a strange priest, is searched if it looks a trifle too thick. It may be said, in fact, that the man who gets past the *douane* with any contraband goods is clever enough to earn a living otherwise—if only the job had the necessary risk to attract him.

The motor-smuggler, however, is the most serious factor nowadays. He frequently carries well over a ton of the precious weed, his speed is such as to make his capture extremely difficult, and in nearly every case his revolver-shooting is excellent. In the course of my investigations for THE WIDE WORLD I spent one night with the Customs men who were waiting for a car to come through. I suppose we waited some three or four hours—a little party of eight or nine of us—and at last we heard the low hum of a car travelling at high speed. We all stiffened and I gripped my Mauser a little tighter, for instinctively I felt myself in the War again. A minute or two later a low grey car swept round the curve. I have no idea who the driver was, but he was no fool. As he came towards us he opened out and made for the red lamp in the middle of the road. When he was almost on us we fired at the knob of a head which we could see bent over the wheel. Nine shots rang out; I remember firing four myself with what I thought sufficient precision. The only effect was that the driver's cap flew into the air. For a moment the car made a sharp swerve; then it dashed on again. I suppose his speed would be a little over eighty miles an hour. After

he had vanished we picked the cap up and examined it. It had a little tear through the peak, and was of an excellent English make. "Heath's, Birmingham," we read in it, and wondered deeply. Returning to the barracks I was naturally the subject of no little chaffing. "So the smugglers are *les Anglaises* then, *tiens!*" laughed the *douaniers*. "What a villainous nation these English are!" and so on *ad infinitum*. Later I bought drinks for them all and they obligingly shifted the guilt on to some American who must have visited England before coming over, so all was well.

The next morning I had arranged to visit the Customs museum at Lille, but about nine-thirty I received a visit from Monsieur Dubois, the chief, who told me that they expected a "little affair" to happen that very night, and that I must certainly be present. The letter I had brought from Paris gave me authority to shoot and kill any smugglers who came my way, so that you may believe it was with sufficiently bloodthirsty feelings that I awaited the coming of night. I have had all kinds of automatic pistols, with which, in the days of my youth, I have shot both my friends and myself, but I had a vast confidence in the sinister-looking Mauser that reposed in my pocket.

"Yes, it's a very pretty gun," said the chief, examining it with interest. "Of course, it isn't loaded"—and before I could speak he had blown a neat little hole through my suit-case and another in the wall behind it.

"You had better have it back at once," he added, hastily, and handed the pistol to me. "Thank you," said I, and immediately let it off between his feet. After that he left me rather hurriedly.

I visited the Customs museum that afternoon. As far as I know, it is the only one of its sort in the world. A small building, with a most obliging custodian, it contains everything imaginable relating to smuggling and the Customs system.

There were cases and cases containing tobacco in every imaginable state of preparation. The members of the staff have an immense fund of information concerning contraband, and as they talk to you they fill their pipes from the cases with the greatest *sang-froid*. Evidently the museum holds little that is sacred for them. I returned to my hotel at about five o'clock, and later made my way out to Commune, the headquarters of all that concerns smuggling. Evidently I had arrived on a gala night, for the staff seemed excited. They had received information, it appeared, that a fast smuggling automobile would come through about midnight, and they had accordingly chartered an even faster car to chase it should their shots have no effect on its progress. I went round the back of the sheds and had a look at the car. It was quite German, I regret to admit, but one of the very finest Germany has turned out for several years, an eighty horse-power Adler of the latest type. At some time or other it had evidently seen the racing-track, for it had a great white number painted on the side of the bonnet, and the huge exhaust pipe was tastefully bound with asbestos cord in the approved manner. I saw nothing of the chauffeur. "He has gone to have a little refreshment," they said, and pointed in the direction of a *café*.

Preparing to search a country cart at the frontier.

About this time arrived Monsieur Barrét, one of the editors of the *Telegramme*, a

Lillois paper. He was a man of about fifty, and seemed to know absolutely everything there was to know about the smuggling industry. He told me that the village of Ploegsteert—the immortal "Plug Street" of the British Army—was for years the headquarters of all the smugglers in Belgium.

At one point great use is made of dogs, who have as large a parcel of tobacco as they can comfortably carry tied on their backs. They are trained to cross the frontier to certain specified places and then return to their homes on the other side. This scheme the Customs officials have checkmated by

A Customs officer, with one of the specially-trained dogs, searching a villager.

The people there, he said, came of long families of contrabandists, and practised smuggling as quite an ordinary and respectable profession. Fathers would teach their sons, and they in due time would hand on the secrets to their children. The Customs officials kept up a lively battle of wits with them, but on the whole got the worst of it. It seemed as if the very atmosphere of the place was contagious, and after a month or two there staid officials would be caught carrying a blouseful of good *caporal* across the frontier. Consequently the patrols were changed at frequent intervals, so that no one should fall under the sinister spell of the village.

The ruses the smugglers used were nearly all of a highly intelligent nature. Some paving stones left at the station of Belle Hautesse, for instance, were found to be nothing more than artistically-made pasteboard boxes, filled with tobacco. A tree-trunk was also found hollowed out and then filled with the fragrant weed. Around the village of Hautekerque double-floored carts were used for about a year before any inkling of the game came to the ears of the Customs people.

keeping a kennel of large dogs who chase and attack the smugglers' animals. These dogs are marvellously trained and can scent a smuggler with a sagacity that is truly abnormal. They will fly at the throat of a man and bring him down in nearly every case. The contrabandist who attempts to put up a fight with these formidable animals is a fool. They have been carefully taught their trade, and would be quite as ready to tear open the man's throat as to look at him. All the same, apart from their profession, they are most lovable creatures, and seem to spend all their time playing with the officials.

Towards eight o'clock it was considered dark enough for some of us to take up our positions on what may be called "the line of fire." Two men were posted in the ditch alongside the road and another some yards distant; behind lay the *poste d'Octroi* itself. As for me, I stayed inside the office and chatted with Monsieur Dubois.

A little after eleven o'clock we all took up our places along the road. About six of us were posted on the French side, and the remaining five on the Belgian. As a

matter of fact Belgian Customs officials have no right whatever on the French side, and *vice-versâ*, but on a night such as this trifles are waived for the sake of justice. Our car had gone some distance down the road and was waiting in a side-lane for the smugglers to come along. Naturally it had its engine running, and I rather fancy its first speed engaged, for the good driver had returned all red wine and excitement.

Perhaps an hour passed, and during the waiting I found that, although I had my gun with me, I had forgotten to load it and had no cartridges! Just then the sound of an approaching car broke on our ears, coming at a good rate about a kilometre away. We listened, all excitement at once, and in a moment or two heard two sharp reports. Then another engine hummed and we knew that the chase had begun.

The smuggling car that was pursued by the Customs officers and caught fire in a field.

It seemed hours before the lean form of a car swept round the curve of the road, closely followed by another which appeared to be keeping it well in hand. Two or three of us fired at the leading car as it passed, and at all events the driver was an excellent sport, for he waved a mocking hand. As it careered out of sight I saw that the rear left-hand tyre was flat, and little bits of rubber were flying in all directions. Our car kept close behind it, the driver firing calmly and steadily all the time.

In two or three seconds they were round the bend of the road and out of sight altogether. We listened to the notes of their exhausts, and suddenly heard one of them change down.

Another two or three seconds of suspense and then, like the crack of doom, there came a sudden crash, followed by a muffled explosion.

"That's it!" said the chief, and jumping out of his ditch he made for the ancient car that stood behind the old watch-house. I was at the wheel immediately, and soon after we were rattling merrily down the road towards the location of the noise.

When we got there the smugglers' car lay in a field level with the road. There was no sign of its driver, but the car itself was burning away merrily, and great clouds of steam and black smoke covered the country-side. A most remarkable part of the whole affair was the unmistakable smell of burning tobacco.

The driver of our car stood by the bonfire and laughed heartily enough. "All three tyres flat," he said, "and the jolly old 'bus on fire." Then he looked cheerfully at me and uttered what he thought was the appropriate English remark: "Cheeri 'oh!" he cried.

"Now," said the chief, "to arrest the driver!"

This sounded quite the proper thing to do, but unfortunately the speed at which the pursuing car had been going had taken it nearly half a kilometre past the wrecked smuggler, and by the time the driver had been able to turn and go back to the place of the accident, he found nothing but a burning car. The driver had apparently been unhurt and, like the Arabs, had "folded his tents and silently stolen away."

A spirit of philosophy seemed to descend upon us. Our man had completely given us the slip—and that was all there was to it. We sat around the car and filled our pipes from the mounds of tobacco that lay about us. Suddenly our driver rushed back to his car and returned with a large bottle nearly full of red wine. "Let us drink," he said solemnly, "to the health of the other chap." And, filling a tin mug with his beloved nectar, he drained it heartily.

A Soldier of Fortune

PART II.

by

"E"

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD ELCOCK

Here is the continuation of one of the most remarkable personal narratives we have ever published. Seeking a job after the War, in which he served as an officer in the Royal Naval Reserve, the Author literally tumbled out of one adventure into another, never knowing what was going to turn up next. At the present moment, still hoping for the best, he lies in a French prison, laid by the heels at last after a series of daring escapades. The manner in which the manuscript reached us—smuggled out of the jail in small sections under the very noses of the authorities — constitutes a story in itself if we were at liberty to relate it, but its disclosure, or the revelation of the Author's identity, might subject him to the risk of severe punishment. All we can say is that he has furnished us with official certificates and other documents which appear to establish the authenticity of his statements. This striking narrative will prove once again to stay-at-home readers that adventure in plenty is still to be found in this workaday world of ours.

WE were now actually on our way to Oran, and if all went well would reach our destination about 5 a.m. The journey was not a pleasant one, for our progress was slow and the carriages were very dirty.

The sergeant was soon fast asleep in a corner, but I felt too anxious to follow his example. As we drew near Oran I shook him and told him to wake up and keep his weather-eye open.

We had a wash and tidied ourselves up, and meanwhile the town gradually came into sight. Finally the train drew into the station. Here we were surprised and somewhat alarmed to find the platform crowded with troops, including men from our own regiment, but we did not recognize any of them. It appeared that they were waiting for an out-bound train.

By this time we were getting hungry, so we made for the Orient, one of the most fashionable quarters of Oran, found a good hotel, and had a meal and a refreshing bath. Then we went down to the docks, but to our disappointment there was not a single British ship in the harbour, and our hopes of escape fell almost to zero. There was a boat leaving for Marseilles in the afternoon, however, and though travelling by this meant considerable risk, as it was crowded with military passengers, we determined to chance our luck if we could obtain passages. This was somewhat problematical as, though we had passports, they bore our enlistment stamps, and so we did not dare to show them.

We wandered about for a few hours, giving the British Consulate as wide a berth as possible, as we did not quite know how the officials there would receive us.

At midday, plucking up our courage, we presented ourselves at Cook's office, only to find it closed, but later on in the day we managed to obtain two first-class tickets for

Marseilles. This made a big hole in our little store of money, but we thought ourselves lucky to get passages at all.

We then returned to the *café* and, on seating ourselves, found to our dismay that the provost-sergeant of the Oran Company of the Legion was at a table not many yards away from us! Fortunately he did not recognize us, and presently went out

We came to the conclusion that the sooner we got down to the docks and on to the boat the better it would be for us. We had no difficulty in getting on board and were duly shown our berths by the steward. Not wishing to attract attention, and thinking that there might be soldiers on deck who would recognize us, we remained in our cabins.

Presently I heard the engine-room bell ring, and knew that the boat would soon be moving. Ere long the ropes were cast off and, to our intense relief, we were under way. We now thought it would be safe to venture out on deck, and it was with great satisfaction that we watched the barracks of Oran fade from view. But our difficulties were not yet wholly at an end, for we still had to pass the Customs and police officers at Marseilles.

Strangely enough, when going down to dinner we found that our cabin number and our dinner-table number was the fateful "13," and I must confess to a creepy feeling as I took my seat. Near to us were three charming girls, and I heard them discussing in perfect English the fact that we had their seats, but they called it "the *lucky* 13," as in France the people have exactly the opposite idea about this particular number.

I looked at the sergeant to see if he had heard the conversation. Evidently he had, for he rose quickly to his feet and, bowing to the ladies, said: "Pardon me, but if you are really fond of this number, my friend and I, who hate it, will be delighted to change seats with you."

After this we got into conversation with the ladies, and after dinner we had some music, as the sergeant had a fine tenor voice and I myself am supposed to possess a certain degree of musical

"He rose quickly to his feet and, bowing to the ladies, said: 'My friend and I will be delighted to change seats with you.'"

ability. The passengers seemed very satisfied with our performance and asked us to continue, but we were soon nearly at the end of our little stock of songs. Our lady friends, however, came to the rescue, and turned out to be accomplished vocalists and dancers. As a matter of fact they were, they told us, professionals on tour.

On reaching Marseilles we passed the Customs without difficulty, but we were still in France and in danger of arrest. We did not dare to go west towards Spain, and we had not sufficient money to go north to the Belgian frontier. If we could not obtain a ship we realized that things would soon go badly with us, as we had only ninety-eight francs left between us.

We informed our newly-found friends that being seafaring men we were looking for a ship. They in return told us that they had an engagement at one of the Marseilles theatres for a week. They evidently

understood our difficulties, and took us with them to their lodgings, where they introduced us to their landlady, who was also British, and who treated us very kindly, putting us up for several days.

We paid daily visits to the docks looking for a ship, but all in vain; there were many men out of work and shipping was at a complete standstill. All the time, too, we ran the risk of being arrested as deserters, for the French have a very strict police registration system, and for obvious reasons we did not dare to attempt to procure the necessary papers.

Our girl friends were booked for Nice in a week's time, and then for Genoa. They were very anxious to lend us money, but we could not bring ourselves to accept their hard-earned wages. They then asked us if we would form a private theatrical company with them, and to this we agreed. We worked up a fairly good little play, and the Marseilles agent arranged a booking for us in Genoa, at the Eden Theatre.

The problem now was: How were the sergeant and I to get out of France? We dare not go west and we could not go north. The three girls would be at Nice for a week, and we therefore arranged to meet them in Genoa, the sergeant and I going as far as Nice with them, and afterwards proceeding to Monte Carlo. Before parting, however, they insisted on giving us five hundred francs as our share in the theatrical partnership we had entered into. As a precaution against future needs I posted three hundred francs to the British Consul at Genoa to be called for.

The sergeant and I duly explored Monte Carlo, and on reaching the Casino he was eager to go inside. I explained to him that this meant producing our passports, which I was not anxious to do. Though Monte Carlo is an independent principality and we could not therefore be arrested as deserters, it is also under the protection of France, and there was Nice on one side and Mentone

on the other, at either of which towns we might be arrested. The sergeant, however, was very insistent, and finally I gave in to his wishes and we entered the building.

We were received quite cordially, and asked to produce our passports and to sign the book. The officials merely glanced at the passports, returning them with the remark: "These are all right, gentlemen; you can enter. How long will you be staying in Monte Carlo?"

We replied that we should only be remaining a few days, and were then duly presented with the necessary passes.

IN LUCK'S WAY.

On entering the first gaming-room the sergeant was amazed as he watched the players at *rouge-et-noir*. He asked me for a few francs to stake with, and I told him what to do. His number won. Then I had a turn and also won, though a smaller amount than his. Then I lost; but the sergeant kept on, and as the night wore on he won six thousand francs. I did not care to take any further risks, but contented myself with watching.

My companion had now become desperately absorbed in the game and was staking wildly for himself and an old lady who evidently believed in his luck. I begged him to come away, but the poison had got into his brain and he refused to leave. I lost my temper and told him I should go without him. This led to hasty words, but finally he promised to come in another half-hour. During this time the six thousand francs became reduced to five thousand.

The next day we joined our girl friends in Nice, told them of our luck, paid the money into an English bank, and made arrangements for a draft at Genoa. The girls packed up our clothes in their baskets as stage property in order to get them over the frontier in safety, because our passports, bearing as they did the enlistment stamps, were useless.

Our chief concern now was to get into Italy. On arriving at Mentone, we proceeded to Ventimiglia, an Italian frontier town about nine kilometres away. To our joy we did not experience any difficulty here; but we were told that if we desired to remain more than seven days we should need to get our passports viséd by the Consul. We found the Italians very friendly and well-disposed.

The next day we started for Genoa. On arriving I made for a well-known British club of which I was once a member in my seafaring days, and met with a hearty welcome from old comrades. I was glad to get back into my former haunts again, but the sergeant did not seem as well pleased as I was.

Now, when I did not want a ship, I could have found plenty, as many were needing engineer officers to replace men who wished to return home after a long spell of trading between Italy, Egypt, and the East. There was no suitable work, however, for the sergeant. Also, having entered into a partnership with the girls, we meant to keep our word to them, so we waited for them to join us.

The Consul at Genoa, to our keen satisfaction, provided us with new passports without difficulty, and once more we paraded the streets free men. Apparently our troubles were at an end.

When the girls joined us we decided to tell them our story in confidence. At first they could scarcely believe it, but we showed them our old passports with the military stamps, and at last succeeded in convincing them. Henceforth they seemed to regard us as heroes.

Our little show met with great success at the Eden Theatre, which was attended by many English residents in Genoa, and we began to think that we must be real artistes.

We then went on to Vienna and Trieste, finding the journey very interesting. We passed an uneventful week in Trieste, going on from there to Vienna, breaking our journey in the Tyrol. It was then summer, and the mountain districts were swarming with visitors. The scenery was wonderfully beautiful, and we were much impressed by the courtesy of the inhabitants.

We had an enjoyable stay in Vienna, meeting many English people. Our next move was into Germany, by way of Lintz and Kuptien, where I had to get my passport viséd by the German Consul.

Late one night we arrived at Frankfurt, where we spent a week, afterwards going on to Wiesbaden, which was under the control of the French army of occupation. A few pleasant weeks followed, and then once more trouble began to brew. The danger-lights showed ahead of the sergeant and myself, and so we made for Cologne to seek safety under the protection of the British Rhine army. To our dismay, however, we found that both forces were working together—the English could arrest any French soldier in Cologne, and the French could arrest any British soldier. To cut a long story short, the fate we thought ourselves safe from presently befell us, and we found ourselves under arrest as deserters from the French Foreign Legion!

It all happened as follows: While at Wiesbaden we had to report to the French military authorities in order to obtain permission to remain, this being a regulation in all towns on the Rhine under the Allied military forces. When we presented ourselves, we were told to return the next day for our permits. Various questions were then put to me, and I was informed that a non-commissioned officer, a deserter, was in their *Gazette*, and that I answered to the description. The sergeant, who had joined the Legion under

another name, passed without question, but I had used my own name throughout, which probably led to my undoing.

The official went on to say that as I was a British subject and my passport was in order, he could not have me arrested at the moment, but I must not leave the town without his permission, as he wished to make inquiries about me from the military authorities.

In a great state of anxiety I hastened to talk the matter over with my friends, and we decided to make for Cologne, where we thought we should be safe. In this, as it transpired, we were entirely mistaken; we should instead have gone to Frankfurt, where we should have been out of the danger zone.

ARRESTED!

The girls were able to cancel their engagement in Wiesbaden, and we duly set off for Cologne, where we again had to report ourselves. Here I was brought before the commandant of the military police, who told me that he had had orders from the French Government to arrest me! He was sorry, he said, but must carry out his instructions.

My faithful friend refused to leave me. He saw the girls safely into the train for Brussels and then, returning, gave himself up as a deserter like myself. For several days we were detained in the guardroom, and then French military police arrived and took us back in custody to Wiesbaden. Six days later found us back at our regimental depôt —back to the hateful life we thought we had finished with for ever!

From the rank of a non-commissioned officer I was degraded to private, while the sergeant was sentenced to a month's field punishment, which was afterwards reduced to eight days. This over, we got into touch by wire with our girl friends, who were now in Antwerp. They informed us that they had placed money to our credit in the bank at Oran, hoping that we might yet escape again and reach England.

Luck seemed to be coming our way once more, for a few days later we were drafted to the Oran company and I was promoted again to my position of under-officer. For a time things went well, and then I got into an argument with an Algerian officer. Words led to blows, and finally, like a fool, I struck him. I was promptly arrested and taken to the fort. A court-martial followed, and seven days afterwards I was handed a paper saying that the punishment for striking an officer was death. I was brought before the court again, sentenced to death, and told that if the sentence was confirmed by the General I should be shot.

There followed six days of unspeakable agony of mind. On the seventh an armed squad took me from the guardroom to the parade ground, where the company was drawn up on three sides of a square. I was placed at the open end. The captain of the company then read out the account of the trial and the sentence of death pronounced by the court. The papers from the General were next produced and read. The General had refused to confirm the death sentence and asked for further evidence.

This was a kind of temporary reprieve, and for a time I was once more free to carry out my duties as a soldier. Two days later I was again marched on parade, and the captain read out a telegram received from the General. I was to be acquitted, it stated, and the Algerian lieutenant was to be discharged for the triple offence of having made a false statement on oath, being intoxicated while in uniform, and using violent language to an under-officer.

Once again I was free, and still an under-officer, but I found life in the Legion more than ever unbearable. I talked the matter over with the sergeant, and told him that unless I escaped I should go mad. He was ready for anything, he said, but our funds were low and we knew that great care would be required. This time, we decided, we must make for the north of France, enter Belgium, and get on board a boat for England. An additional difficulty was the fact that we only possessed our old passports with the tell-tale military stamps. The others had been taken away.

The Oran barracks stood on a high cliff overlooking the sea, and there was only one entrance. As at all French forts and barracks there were closed gates, and sentinels on watch day and night.

FRESH PREPARATIONS FOR ESCAPE.

Whatever the difficulties, however, we were determined to attempt another escape. We therefore went to town in the ordinary way, being due back in barracks at 10 p.m. for roll-call. We had already made all necessary preparations as to clothing, purchasing blue serge suits and civilian shoes. I also managed to get two uniform caps and the standard badges and buttons of the British mercantile marine. It would have been sheer madness to have tried to escape without money, but we reckoned we had sufficient in hand to start us on our way.

The clothes were stored at a house in an Arab quarter of the town, and now, all being in readiness, we sewed the buttons on to our coats and changed into the uniforms of the mercantile marine. We fixed up our medal ribbons, but had to do without the gold arm-bands, as we could not procure any. Then we boldly walked to the station and booked for Algiers. It was some time before the train started, so we occupied ourselves by walking round a part of the town not frequented by soldiers.

No one took any notice of us, and about 11 p.m. we returned to the station and took our places in the train. Soon we saw a Zouave picket arriving—looking for us! They searched the train from end to end several times. The Zouave officer actually opened the door of our carriage and on seeing, as he thought, two British mercantile officers, apologized, saying that they were searching for two Legionnaires who had deserted and who had been traced as far as the station. Had we, by any chance, seen anything of them?

I replied that I only had a slight knowledge of French, and should be glad if he would speak a little slower. He repeated his question, whereupon I gravely assured him that I had not seen any persons answering to such a description. The officer thanked me, saluted, and marched his picket out. This was indeed a stroke of good fortune, for had our own regimental picket inspected the train we should undoubtedly have been detected. Probably, however, they were hunting round the Arab quarters for two Legionnaires in uniform.

At midnight the train pulled out of the station and we had an uneventful journey to Algiers. Proceeding to the docks, we tried several English ships, but failed to get on any of them. Finally we found one going to Marseilles, the captain of which was quite willing to give us a lift over.

On arriving at Marseilles we lost no time in taking tickets for Paris, and eighteen hours later we found ourselves in the Gare de Lyon. We crossed over to the Gare de Nord, but being afraid to book to Calais we took tickets for Valenciennes. From here we took the tram to Denain, a large mining town twenty-five miles this side of Mons. We decided, however, that this was not a safe place to remain in, so we returned to Valenciennes and went to Blanc Maison, the frontier control-post near the Belgian town of Quiverain.

We passed the French control unmolested, but the Belgian officer demanded our papers, and as we had none he refused to pass us. We retraced our steps, therefore, between the two controls and took tram to St. Amond, where we remained for that night.

Early next morning we left for Lille, where we spent a few hours and then set out for the frontier at Tournay. Here misfortune befell us, as the frontier control officials again refused to pass us without the necessary papers. With my nerves on edge I got into a heated argument with a civil gendarme, which ended in the sergeant and I being locked up. So near home and yet still so far away!

We were removed to the jail, and the following morning were carefully searched. I should explain that some time previously we had discarded our brass buttons and the mercantile marine caps and replaced them by civilian ones.

Brought before the court, we were charged with an infraction of the Foreigners' Act in not having the necessary papers and police authority to be in France. They could not charge us as vagabonds, for we had money on us and were well dressed, but we could not prove who we were, as we had no identity cards to show.

Two days passed and we thought the judge would probably give us seven days in jail and a police pass to get out of France within twenty-four hours. In that case the Consul would have to give us a paper to take us over the frontier or ship us home.

DISASTER!

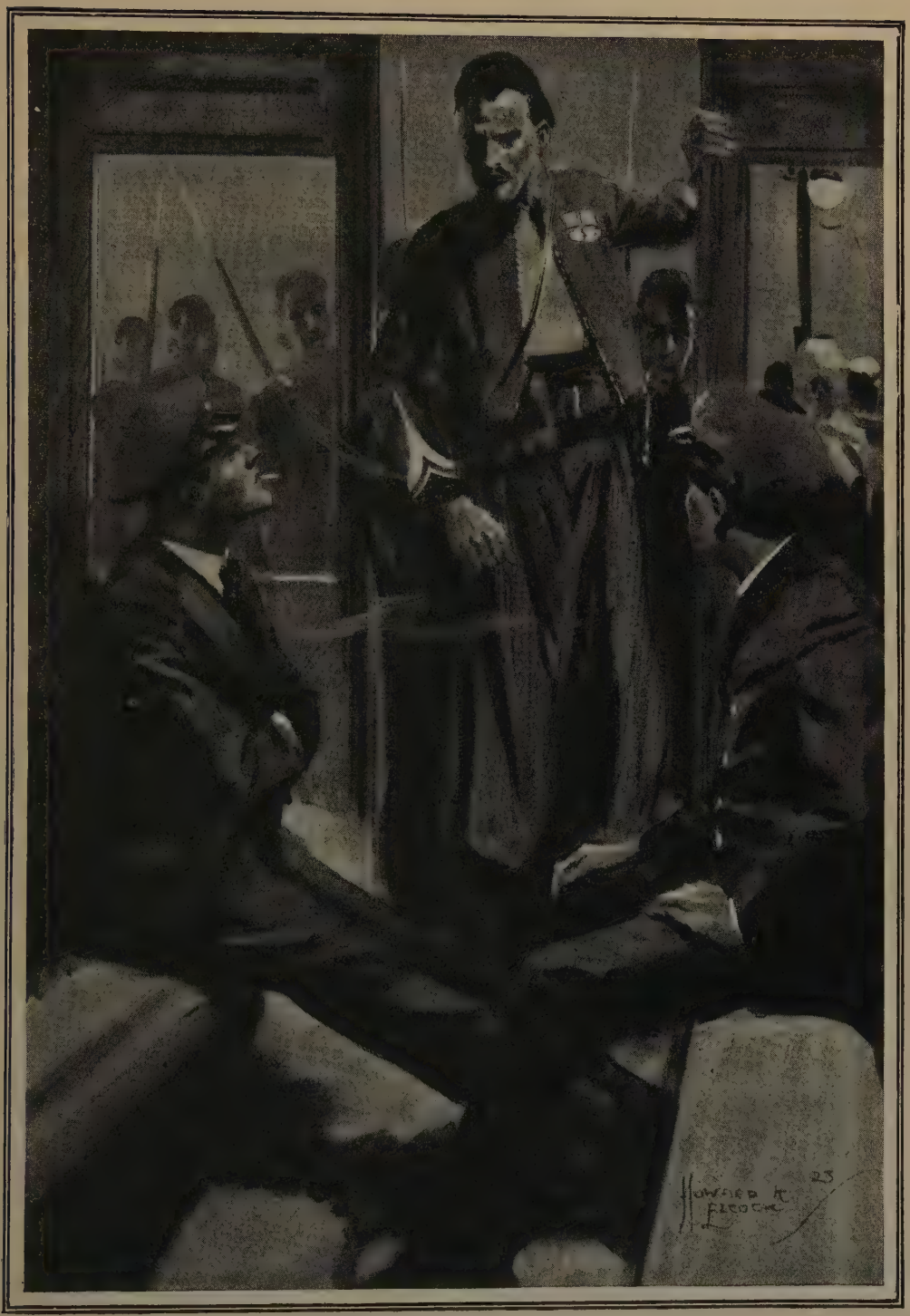
Our expectations, however, were sadly wide of the mark. When we were brought before the judge he informed us that we were to be taken to the barracks, there to await an escort to take us to Fort St. Jean, the embarkation depôt at Marseilles! Our identity had been discovered and our second attempt at escape, like the first, had ended in utter disaster!

In chains and carefully guarded, we were taken to Lille, where we remained for twenty-four hours before getting into the train for our journey south. Fortunately for us we had two capital fellows as escort, so that the ordeal was not as painful as it might have been. Once again, after a few days' liberty, we found ourselves captives, shut up in a grim round-tower overlooking the harbour of Marseilles. This old fort stands very high up, close to the Transporter Bridge and Quay de Jollette.

Still we were not cowed, and determined to continue our efforts to escape as long as our funds held out.

We were not the only unfortunates housed in the town, as there were fifteen other prisoners waiting for the boat to North Africa. None of these men were conscript soldiers, as the Colonial Army is entirely composed of volunteers. Amongst these prisoners were men from the Zouaves, two soldiers from the Foreign Legion, one Tirailleur, and five great six-footers of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. These last were deserters, two of whom were in plain clothes and had been away for thirty-one months before their arrest. They were desperate men and would stop at nothing to get away. When they found we were in the Legion, and British, we soon became friends. After sounding us, and coming to the conclusion that we were to be trusted, they took us into their confidence.

They told us that all the detention men would be sent over in the monthly supply boat. That meant a fortnight or three weeks more for us in Marseilles, during which time they planned to escape. They had come from



"The Zouave officer actually opened the door of our carriage."

Nimes and had several thousand francs with them, prisoners being allowed to retain their money and all personal property except firearms. The gendarmes here were composed of native troops from Senegal and the under-officer of the guard was a white conscript only twenty-one years of age. Fellows of this class only have eighteen months to serve and count the days and hours until they can return to civil life. The Senegalese, our informants told us, could easily be bribed. These two Chasseurs had managed to smuggle in two automatics and a few boxes of cartridges and they evidently meant business.

In order that you may properly understand what follows, I should explain that to enter the fort it is necessary to cross a very narrow bridge about sixty feet long, spanning a salt-water moat and connecting with the quay. A number of fishing boats used this moat for unloading their catches. After passing the guard there is a long incline, and then a flight of three hundred stone stairs, which lead up to the barrack square and fortress proper, with gun-turrets all round. At the left-hand corner of the ramparts stands the round tower where we were confined. Inside this, on the lowest floor, in a line with the square and the ramparts, is the detention-room. There is no door, but a large iron gate with bars about six inches apart, opening on to a passage-way, along which the corporal of the guard walks when inspecting the prisoners.

The two Chasseurs had their plans well laid, and after giving us full details they informed us that we were to commence operations that night after 11 p.m.

THE JAIL-BREAK.

In due course the corporal arrived and, being in a talkative mood, lit a cigarette, sat down on the wooden stool at the gate, and commenced chatting. He told us incidentally that there were only four guards on the outer gates and two military police on the bridge. This was good news. We got him to go down and buy a bottle of white wine and some sandwiches, and these we shared with him. About 10.30 p.m. one of the Chasseurs called to him : " Turn round for a minute, corporal," he said ; " there's something creeping along the collar of your tunic."

The unsuspecting corporal turned his back to the bars, and in an instant the big cavalryman's hands shot through and gripped him by the neck until he was wellnigh choked.

" One word and I will throttle you to death ! " hissed the Chasseur. " Out with the key of the cell gate, or you're a dead man ! "

The key was immediately produced.

The second Chasseur then removed the helpless corporal's revolver from its holster, leaving him unarmed and without his key. The man who was holding him then released his grip, while his comrade levelled his pistol at him. A few seconds later the gate was unfastened and we all passed out.

Taking the corporal with us, with the pistol still menacing him, we passed round the back of the tower. Everything was quiet as the grave ; only a few of the staff and the troops waiting for the boat lived in the place. Arriving at the top of the steps we soon skipped down to the bottom. The sentry challenged us, but was immediately felled to the ground, bound, and gagged. We then made straight for the main guard. Only two men were on duty ; the corporal was sleeping in his room. The sight of the levelled automatics filled the Senegalese sentries with terror, and they were easily taken captive. We pushed them before us out through the small gate, turned the key in the lock, and dropped it into the moat. There was no sign of a gendarme at the bridge gate which opened on to the quay. This gate was only fastened with a latch and we were soon on the quay.

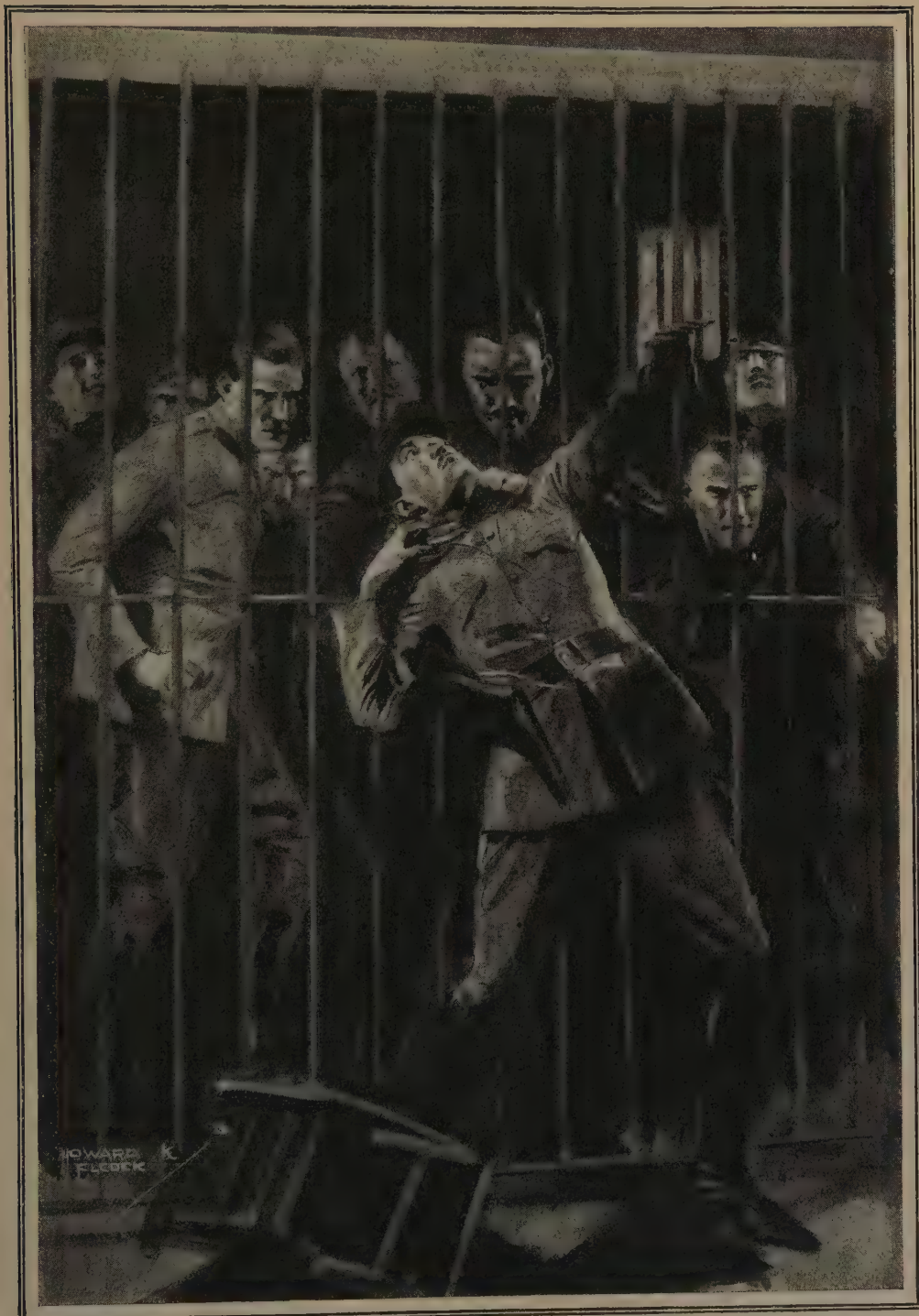
The gendarme, it appeared, was on the far side of the quay, under the shadow of the wall. Catching sight of us as we emerged, he blew his whistle shrilly and, drawing his automatic, fired several rounds at us, but without effect. We took to our heels at once, but had not proceeded more than forty or fifty yards when the civil gendarmes came on the scene, and we put up a running fight as we raced along the quay front until we reached the lighted part of the district, where the *cafés* were still open. I myself fired twenty-two rounds with the pistol taken from the corporal, as we had secured the loading clips as well, and an automatic can be charged almost as easily as lighting a match.

There were only four or five civil gendarmes helping the military fellow, and they found our fire too hot for them and took cover. We did not, however, get off scot free, for I got a bullet through my right forearm.

On reaching the Rue de Conclure we ran for all we were worth—fifteen of us, and the sergeant and I soon got clean away. The two Chasseurs, I have since heard, are still free and in Germany. What became of the others I do not know.

Being in civilian clothes, my companion and I once again booked north by the night mail—the Rome to Calais express—remaining on the train until we reached Calais.

We spent several days in Calais, but had to keep under cover. We paid a visit to Boulogne, but found the docks were being closely watched, and we felt as if everyone must be looking at us suspiciously. It was evidently quite useless to try to cross to England from here as the difficulties were insurmountable. For one thing, we needed a clearance from the French police before we could go on board any vessel, and that we could not get. We tried to bribe some



"In an instant the big cavalryman's hands shot through and gripped him by the neck. 'One word and I will throttle you to death!'"

fishermen to take us across the Channel and put us ashore at Dover, but they were afraid to take the risk.

By this time the military had circulated full information concerning us, and the Marseilles newspapers made a special feature of the affair. One journal I saw had two long columns describing what had taken place and giving a graphic account of our escape from the time when we got out of the detention-room till we split up and ran.

From a distance, with sinking hearts, we watched the Calais boats leaving for England. Each time we had tried to effect our escape we had got almost within sight of home, only to fail ignominiously. Was that to be our fate on this occasion ?

Only one chance now remained, and that was to get to Dunkerque. Here, on visiting the docks, we again met with disappointment. We were now getting desperate, and realizing that nearly all hope was lost took a big risk and made for Ostend.

THE FINAL FAILURE.

We passed the frontier rail control and, arriving at Ostend, took our boat tickets. Now, we thought, we were as good as free ! When we showed our passports to the Belgians the official examined them closely and then said something to his fellow-officer in Flemish. They took us into the office and produced various papers. Sure enough, there were our photographs taken at Lille by the police after our arrest on the frontier at Tournay. A full account of the Marseilles affair accompanied the pictures and the photographs of several of our detention-room companions were also given. The civil authorities had charged us with causing a disturbance and using firearms to the danger of the public. The information had been circulated throughout France and Belgium by means of the weekly *Police Gazette*.

Once again we were prisoners ! The Belgians, however, treated us well, and their guard-rooms are clean and tidy, like those in England.

After five days we were taken to the frontier railway control, handed over to the French gendarmes, conveyed to Lille, and from thence to Boulogne, where we were put in jail.

We remained there for three weeks, and then my good friend the sergeant was transferred elsewhere. I have not seen him since that day, but in May, 1922, I had a letter from him saying that he had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment, transferred to the Disciplinary Company of the Legion, and was expecting to go to the far interior of Morocco.

As for me, I was taken to the barracks at Dunkerque and fitted up with the sky-blue uniform of the French soldier. I was also informed that I was to be tried at Dunkerque and sent back to the civil prison, from which I knew there was no possibility of escape. When I came up for trial I was sentenced by the magistrate to fourteen months' imprisonment, to be served in conjunction with the one-year sentence passed on me by my regiment in my absence. This is the rule in France ; many delinquents are tried in their absence, and, when caught, are thrown into prison to complete the sentence.

Soon after this I was advised by a hardened old sinner who had been before forty-one courts to appeal in my case. He told me how to proceed, and after forty-nine days I was taken to the appeal court.

I was asked why I had come there, to which I replied that I thought my sentence was too severe.

" Ah ! but you are a soldier, and we *must* be severe with you," was the reply. " You would certainly have got an even harder sentence from a military court."

I pleaded my former rank and service, but was only met with the reply : " Well, a man of your standing ought to have known better. You will now receive a new sentence." Then, turning to the court, the judge added : " Gentlemen of the court, arise, and we will deliberate."

With that they went into another room, returning after a few minutes. The president looked over his glasses at me and said : " The one year military sentence we cannot alter."

My hopes rose ; evidently I was going to get some reduction.

He glanced down at his book and then again at me, and continued : " Your civil sentence is increased from fourteen months to two years, to run as one sentence with your military one, making in all two years ! "

The gendarmes led me out, and a few minutes later I was back in prison where, at the moment of writing, I still remain, with eighteen more months to serve before I return to my regiment—a marked man. Then I shall have to face the old hateful life and the wrath of my colonel, and what the final upshot will be time alone will show. I have several more years' military service to complete before I am free from my engagement. I may survive the ordeal, but there is also the possibility that my last resting-place will be in the sands of the desert, side by side with so many of my fellow-Legionnaires.

THE END.

THE MAGIC CARPET.

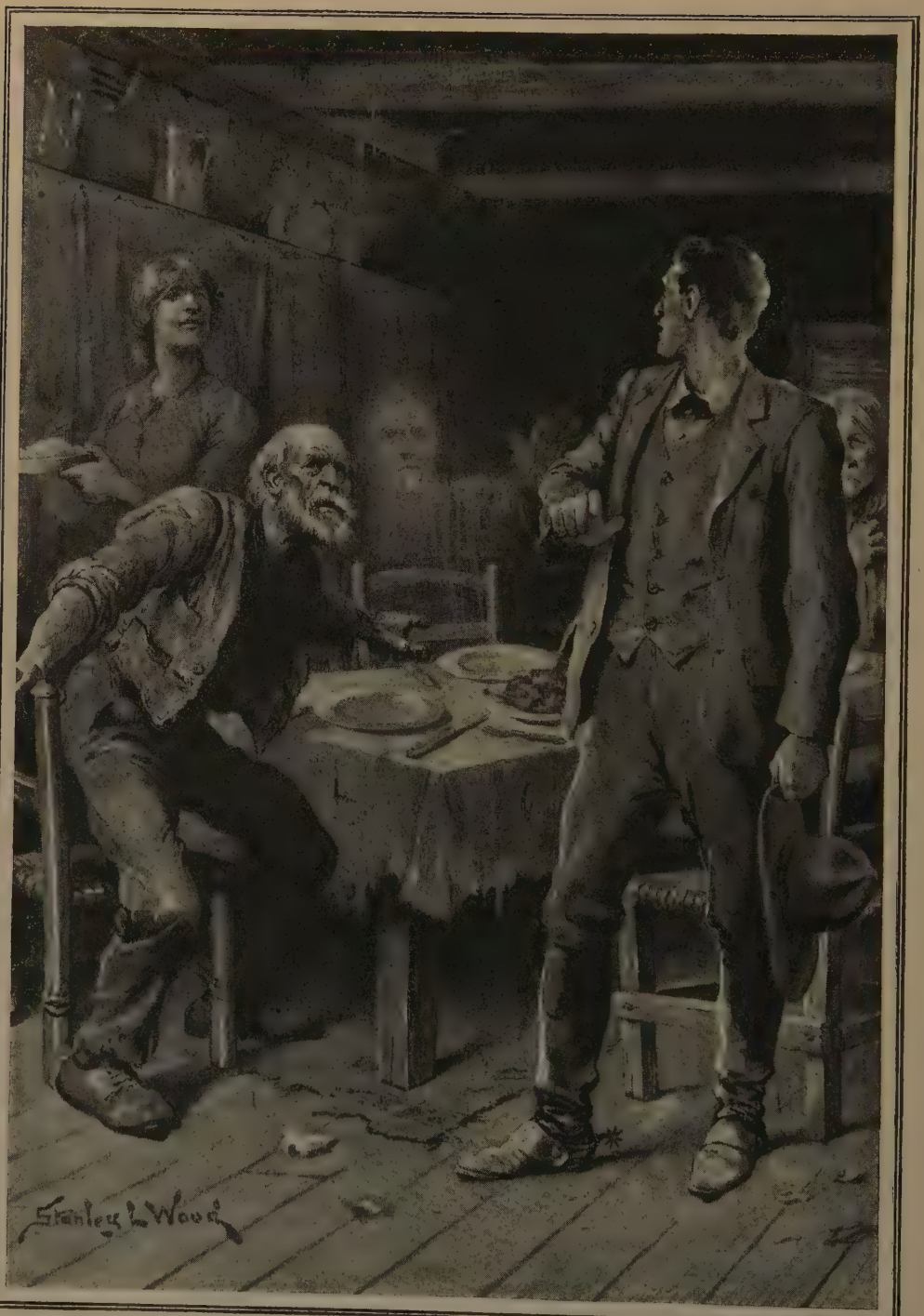
LIKE the magic carpet, THE WIDE WORLD transports you hither and thither about the globe in the twinkling of an eye. Take the present number, for instance. You seek adventure? Read "The Man Who Fell Six Miles" or "The House of Death." Does travel in strange lands attract you? There is "Bali—Isle of Wonder" or "A Woman in Unknown Albania." If you sigh for solitude and sun-kissed lagoons, follow "Mrs. Robinson Crusoe" in the fascinating story of her experiences. And do not miss the breathlessly-exciting continuation of "The Coughlin Kidnapping Case."

"MAN AND HIS NEEDS," the young man cried,
"Is absolutely topping;
It tells you what and where to buy,
And saves you cash when shopping."

The Editor

THE COUGHLIN KIDNAPPING CASE
THREE ASSES IN THE PYRENEES
A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA
THE MAN WHO FELL SIX MILES
THE MEREPUR MYSTERY
CAUGHT BY A CROCODILE
THE HOUSE OF DEATH
THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME POSTMAN
"MRS. ROBINSON CRUSOE"
BALI-ISLE OF WONDER
THE IDOL THAT JUMPED
THE SIX FEATHERS

The remarkable contents-map of "The Wide World Magazine," showing the locality of every article and story in this splendid number.



"TO MY UTTER AMAZEMENT I SAW THAT MY CHAIR WAS ALREADY OCCUPIED. A MAN WAS SITTING THERE—A MAN PALE AND SHADOWY."

(SEE PAGE 90.)

The House of Death

TOLD BY MR & MRS MORRIS CROCKRELL and set down by HUGH THOMASON

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY L. WOOD

A very remarkable narrative, showing how, by the workings of Fate, telepathy—call it what you will—an Oklahoma rancher was able to save his own life and clear up a seemingly inscrutable mystery. "The story is absolutely true," writes Mr. Thomason, "and is set down just as told to me by Mr. and Mrs. Crockrell, who now reside in Los Angeles, California."

AT the time the events herein narrated occurred I was an Oklahoma ranchman. I came originally from the East—Montgomery County, Tennessee. Soon after our marriage my wife and I decided that Tennessee farming was a bit too slow. So we went to Oklahoma, where I bought a ranch in Creek County, near Bristow. We prospered amazingly. I built a fine house for my wife and we enjoyed life immensely. Our next neighbour, Ben Parker, was a splendid chap. He had a mighty nice wife too, and she and Frances—that's my wife—soon became fast friends. You can perhaps imagine, therefore, what a shock it was to us when Ben Parker suddenly disappeared from off the face of the earth. By George! it gives me the creeps now when I think of that fine fellow vanishing as he did! I recall him as he rode up to the ranch door that morning to say "Hello!" to us.

"I'm going to Bristow," he cried, as he took off his hat to Frances, my wife. "Anything I can do for you there, Morris?"

"No," I replied; "not that I can think of at present. When are you coming back?"

"Oh, some time to-morrow," he said. "At least, I think I can get everything done by then. Might possibly be a day late."

We chatted for a few moments in neighbourly fashion and he rode away, calling: "Well, so long! I'll see you again some time."

We looked for him the next day towards night, but he didn't show up.

"Ben must have stayed over," I said to Frances.

The following day we again watched for him, but he didn't come.

"Ben must have found more to attend to than he thought for," I said.

"Maybe he passed by in the night," suggested Frances, carelessly.

At the end of the third day Mrs. Parker drove over from her ranch. I shall never forget her white face and frightened eyes. "Morris," she said, "something has happened to Ben! He's never come back!"

"Hasn't come back?" I repeated. "Why—why—that's curious."

"It's worse than that," she said, with a dreadful sob, "it's frightful! I *know* something terrible has happened to him. What shall I do?"

Well, Frances and I said everything we could to reassure her, but all to no avail. "You don't know Ben," she said over and over again; "he would never keep me in this suspense. If he were alive, he would come back, or at least send me some word."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," I said at last. "You stay here with Frances and I'll go to Bristow and find him."

She brightened up at that and eagerly agreed to the plan. I rode to Bristow as fast as I could, expecting to meet Ben on the way. But I didn't; and, what's more, I couldn't find a trace of him in the town, either at the hotel where he always stopped or at any place where he did business.

Then I went to the police. They scoured the town, but could not find the slightest clue to his whereabouts. He had simply vanished!

I hated to go back, like a dog with its tail between its legs, and break the news to his poor wife, but of course I had to. It pretty nearly killed her, and I don't like to recall the awful days that followed. The ranchmen of the locality offered a reward of five thousand dollars, and all the detectives in Oklahoma got busy, but no one found poor Ben Parker.

Weeks drifted by. Then, one day, when I was in Bristow, I met Steve Shores, a famous old-time detective. Steve was a slim, lanky fellow with lantern jaws and eyes like gimlets. He had the reputation of being the coolest and nerviest officer west of the Mississippi. In Colorado he had gone into the mountains and arrested, singlehanded, two of the worst desperadoes known in Huerfano County. He had held a round-house in Pueblo alone against a mob of frenzied strikers, and his other exploits were of the same vigorous character.

Shores and I got to talking about Ben Parker's disappearance. "He had no trouble in the world," I said in reply to one of Shores'

questions. "His ranch was clear of debt, he had big crops coming in, and his domestic life was as smooth as a summer day."

"Did he have much money with him that day?" asked Shores quietly.

"Yes; his wife told Mrs. Crockrell that he had about twelve hundred dollars he was going to deposit in the bank," I replied.

"Humph!" Shores muttered. "Tidy sum for someone to pick up."

"But, Shores," I argued, "if he was waylaid and killed, what became of his horse?—and where is his body?"

"I don't know," returned Shores reflectively, "but I am going to find out."

"That's good!" I said heartily. "If any man in the West can find him, it's you."

"Well," said Shores, stroking his beard, "he is not the only man who has vanished in this part of the country. I've heard of other cases, but they were strangers. The disappearance of a man so well known as Ben Parker is certainly queer. Still, I'm of the opinion that the puzzle can be solved. There's a key to every mystery, you know."

About this time I went to Fort Smith, Arkansas, for a few days, and while there I happened one day to see at a dog fancier's two magnificent young bloodhounds. I had long been intending to buy a dog for my ranch, and I was so attracted by these two beauties that I just had to buy them both. I took them back with me, and in a few days I couldn't stir without those dogs at my heels. They visited wheat-fields, corrals, chicken-yards, and flower-beds with Frances and me. We named them "Castor" and "Pollux," and petted them a lot, and they stuck to us closer than brothers.

"If I had only had these animals when poor Ben disappeared," I said to my wife one day, "perhaps they might have followed his scent. I wonder we never thought of putting bloodhounds on his track."

I loved the dogs, and they were devoted to me. They followed me everywhere—even when I went to Bristow on business. There I found them a considerable nuisance, and so one day, when I was going to town to deposit some money, I decided I would leave them at home. I therefore enticed them into a box stall in one of the barns and shut them in. Never in your life did you hear such a row as they made! They realized at once that something was wrong—that I was leaving them—and their mournful lamentations would have curdled your blood.

"Why don't you let them go with you?" asked Frances, as I was saying good-bye to her. "They'll drive me crazy with that yelping and moaning."

"They're such a blamed nuisance, Frances," I told her. "I look a sight with them at my heels—Simon Legree and his bloodhounds! Let 'em stay at home for once. It'll do 'em good; they're spoilt."

With that I sprang on my horse. "When'll you be back?" asked my wife. Something went through me like a dart; I thought of Ben Parker. That was the very question I had asked him! But I did not say anything about it to Frances, for I didn't want to leave anything unpleasant for her to think about while I was gone. As I rode out past the barn, "Castor" and "Pollux" set up the most infernal uproar you can imagine. I laughed—it was so awful it was funny. I turned and waved good-bye to my wife, who stood looking after me.

The world is full of mysteries, and one of the mysteries that will puzzle me to the day of my death is why I acted as I did that morning. Why did I leave my dogs at home on that particular day? Why did I keep thinking of my dear friend and neighbour, who had dropped out of sight as effectually as if swallowed up by the earth? And why—when I came to the fork of the roads—did I stop my horse and think: "I can save an hour or two, though I hear the going is not so good, by taking this short cut to Bristow instead of going along the highway?"

Heaven only knows! Certain forces were at work to bring about certain results, I suppose. I had passed the fork hundreds of times and never even considered taking the shorter way. I had never been over the road, but I had heard it was a quick cut to the town. And now, without any deliberation, I took it.

It was a lonely road. The houses were few, the ranches untidy and poorly tilled. Part of the way lay through a deep, dark wood, a wood so gloomy and forbidding that it gave me in some way a feeling of horror. Once I wished I had not come that way. Then I laughed at myself for being a coward.

A brook babbled through this wood. I was tired and thirsty, and presently I got down from my horse, went over to the stream and, throwing myself at full length on the ground, drank my fill. As I rose my eyes were caught by something white lying in the grass.

Why did I go over to it? I don't know—but I did. It was the bleached skeleton of a horse. "Poor brute!" I muttered involuntarily.

I remounted and rode on out of the gloomy woods, relieved to see sunshine once more. And now I come to another peculiar phase of my experience. A little farther on—say three or four hundred yards from the forest—I saw a weather-beaten old rattletrap of a house. Once it might have been a rather pretentious place, but now it had fallen into absolute decay. The shutters were broken; the porches sagged; the paint had all peeled off—everything about it looked decayed.

Ordinarily I should have given it a pitying glance and ridden on, but I was beginning to feel outrageously hungry. I usually made a very hearty breakfast, but that morning I had taken only a cup of

coffee and a few bites of toast. And now, as I approached this ramshackle habitation, I saw, affixed to one of the battered pillars of the front veranda, a board on which was rudely scrawled, "Meals Served Here." I pulled up my horse and regarded that sign thoughtfully. "It doesn't look inviting," I muttered. "I wonder if they would have anything to eat?"

Despite the almost absolute conviction that there would not be good food available, I yet turned my horse's head and rode up the lane to the veranda. An old man shambled out of the front door as I drew rein —a man of nearly seventy, but still powerful of frame. He was dirty and tattered and his bleary eyes blinked cunningly, but he forced a toothless grin when he saw me.

"Hello!" I said. "Can I get dinner here?"

"Yes, yes," he mumbled eagerly.

"What can you give me?"

"A nice chicken dinner with vegetables," he replied, "apple pie, coffee."

"All right," I said. "Where is your stable? Hurry dinner now, for I'm hungry as a bear."

He directed me to the stable, a tumble-down affair about as rickety as the house.

"Put your horse up," he said. "You'll find my son there; he'll give you the feed."

As I loped up to the barn a figure suddenly emerged and came forward. I started perceptibly, in spite of myself. The creature was a hunchback, frightfully distorted. His movements were crab-like, his feet mis-shapen, but I particularly noticed his long, powerful arms, like those of a great ape. His face was the most repulsive I have ever seen, livid to ghastliness, and framed in long, lank black hair, hanging almost to his shoulders. His eyes were sullen and secretive. They scanned me furtively, as he led the way to a stall.

"Pretty tough-looking citizen," I thought, and for a moment wished I had not stopped at this wayside "restaurant."

"'Morris,' she said, 'something has happened to Ben!'"

The hunchback brought oats and I fed my horse. While I was doing so a shout from the house summoned the man. He went sidling off in a horrible crab-fashion, leaving me to follow. I gave my mare a pat and left her contentedly refreshing herself.

I am not an especially observant man as a rule. I can't say I'm heedless, but I am a little absent-minded sometimes and never prone to peer about. Why, then, as I was leaving the stall and passing through the barn did my eyes range along one side of the wall, whereon hung harness and other belongings? As I gazed, indifferently, my heart suddenly seemed to stop beating. For I looked straight at Ben Parker's saddle and bridle!

I went over and closely examined the articles. Yes; there was no doubt. I positively identified them as the property of my friend. Ben Parker, then, had passed that way.

As I stood stupefied at my discovery, suddenly, like a flash of lightning, came the remembrance of the dead horse in the black woods. Good heavens!—*his* horse! With a shaking hand I wiped the moisture from my brow as I tried to collect my scattered senses. What should I do?

My first impulse was to mount my horse and ride like the wind to Bristow, alarm the town, and return with a posse. But that would be to warn these people and put them in a position to hide all traces of their crime, if crime there had been. Possibly Ben had sold them the horse and its trappings before he disappeared. If so, I might only succeed in making a laughing-stock of myself.

I therefore resolved to stop until I had eaten and try to discover more proofs of foul play. I confess I did not like the look of things, and I wished I had brought my gun. "Still," I reflected, "I'm pretty good with my fists. I'll take chances."

Accordingly I sauntered coolly to the front of the house, where I found the old man sitting on the broken porch An elderly woman was there also, an old hag with an evil face and frowsy hair. They invited me to sit down.

"No, thanks," I replied. "I've been sitting all the morning. I'll rest better standing." I kept my eyes on the open door leading into the squalid hall, where filthy stairs led to an upper story.

Suddenly another woman crossed this hall with a platter of steaming chicken in her hands. She was a big, strapping, red-haired wench, dishevelled and ragged. She cast a glance at me as she passed. Her eyes were slightly crossed, I saw, and her whole appearance was in tune with the look of the house and the rest of the repulsive crew.

The old man spoke. "Ridin' fur?" he asked.

"Only to Bristow," I replied.

"Live hereabouts?"

"I'm Morris Crockrell," I said. "My ranch is down below a few miles."

"Oh, yes; I've heerd of ye," replied the old man. "They say ye've got a fine place."

"It's comfortable," I answered.

"Crops pretty good this year, hain't they?" he persisted.

"Well, I can't complain."

Just then the red-headed woman came to the door. "Dinner's on," she briefly announced. "Come, pop."

The old man led the way, the woman followed, and I brought up the rear. We went into what might, with courtesy, be called a dining-room. There was a table with a soiled cloth and cracked dishes. The floor was dirty, the walls discoloured. A shudder ran over me. "What a fool I am," I thought. "I can't eat in this vile place." But matters had gone too far to retreat now, I decided; I would make an effort to partake of the food and get away as soon as possible.

I noted that the room was dark, very dark, the dingy shutters being carefully closed to exclude the light. Another thing I observed was that the table, instead of being set out in the middle of the room, was pushed up before a curtain drawn across a high cupboard, as I judged, for I could see a shelf above, on which stood some old broken crockery. One chair was placed on the side of the table next to this cupboard and there were four other places laid. The hunchback was nowhere to be seen.

"Sit here, Mr. Crockrell," said the old man, indicating the seat before the cupboard.

I was crossing the floor as he spoke and something made me look at the red-haired woman. I caught a glance so pregnant with malign triumph that I involuntarily recoiled. I had almost reached the table when, to my utter amazement, I saw that my chair was already occupied. A man was sitting there—a man pale and shadowy. He raised a thin hand, as if to ward me away, and shook his head warningly. It was Ben Parker!

He was there one instant—the next he was gone!

I paused abruptly at the opposite side of the table. "I'll sit here, if you please," I said, as calmly as I could. And it needed an effort, I can assure you.

We all sat down. Nothing was said. I tried to eat, but only fumbled with my food. All the time I wondered where the hunchback was. Why didn't he come to his dinner? I kept one eye on the door leading to the hall, for fear of a surprise. I had, of course, no theory as to how many more people there might be in the house. I was firmly convinced that my old friend had been permitted, by some mysterious force, to convey to me a warning of my peril.

I refused the pie and rose from my chair. "I'll be going on," I said; "I'm in a hurry to get to Bristow. What do I owe you?"

" Seventy-five cents," said the old man.

I fumbled in my pocket for change and brought up some silver, but saw I had only half a dollar. That necessitated my bringing out a fat roll of bills. Under my lids I saw the thievish faces eagerly watching me. I reeled off a dollar bill and tossed it to the old man. " Never mind the change," I said as I restored the roll to my vest pocket. I began to back towards the hall door, when suddenly all three flung themselves upon me. They leaped, clutched and tore at my throat, my arms, my legs. I speedily realized they were trying to throw me to the floor and that I must fight for my life. I struck out vigorously, hurling them off, but they rushed me again.

I had almost reached the door into the hall, when from behind the curtain rushed the hunchback. His face was ghastly ; his eyes blazed with wicked intent. Joining the others he dealt powerful blows at me with his long, ape-like arms. We fought through the doorway into the hall. The old woman had given up, and lay panting at the foot of the stairs, but the others still hung on, trying all the time to floor me. There was a rickety chair standing in the hall, and I caught it up and brought it down with a terrific crash on the head of the old man, putting him out of the fight.

The red-haired virago, however, still fought on like a man, while the hunchback delivered sledge-hammer blows at every opportunity. But I fought on, retreating slowly toward the outer door.

At last, by superhuman efforts, I got to the step, but these two fiends were close upon me. I was conscious I was getting tired. If I moved into the open, they would give chase, taking me possibly at back and front. I could not get to my horse before they would intercept me. " They will kill me as they killed poor Ben," I told myself.

Suddenly, somewhere outside, above the cursing and snarling of my assailants, I heard a long, deep baying ! It came from the road in the woods. I listened to it vaguely at first, without realizing what it was ; then, as it came nearer, I recognized the voices of my dogs. Putting all my waning strength into one mighty effort, I gave a lusty shout : " Castor—Pollux—help, help ! " I yelled.

And they answered—oh, they answered ! Leaping, bounding, flying up the road they came, mouths open, jaws dripping, teeth bared, hair bristling. Through the gate, up the lane, up the porch—they were at the door.

" Take them, boys ! " was all I could gasp. I saw them plunge at my assailants. Then there came the sound of pounding hoofs on the road, and as three men and a woman rode furiously through the gateway, I fell backwards and dropped in a dead faint on the ground before the steps

When my senses came back I was lying with my head in my wife's lap, looking up into her dear eyes. Castor and Pollux were licking my hands, and Steve Shores was bending over me with a flask in his hand. " Here, Crockrell," he said, " take a pull at this. Pretty tough scrap you had."

" You got here just in time," I said, as they helped me to my feet. " Those devils would have murdered me as they did Ben Parker. How did you all happen to come ? "

" It's a long story," replied Shores, " and we've got a lot to do. What do you mean about Parker ? Have you discovered anything ? "

With that, though I still felt shaky, I led him and Frances to the stable and showed them Parker's saddle and bridle. Then I told him about the dead horse in the woods and all that had happened in the house.

We went back to the crazy old dwelling where, huddled in a corner of the dining-room, were the four vile wretches, securely manacled and guarded by the sheriff and his deputy. " Murphy," said Sheriff Shepherd, to his assistant, as soon as we came in, " ride back to Bristow and bring a posse and a wagon to carry these people to jail. Feeling better now, Crockrell ? "

Shores went direct to the curtain hanging behind the table and thrust it aside, revealing not a cupboard, but a small room. He caught up an axe standing there and came out with it in his hand. " This fellow," he said, nodding toward the glowering hunchback, " did the killing. He struck the victim on the back of the head through the curtain—do you see ? How was it, Crockrell, that you didn't sit in the chair next to the curtain ? "

" I was warned not to," I told him.

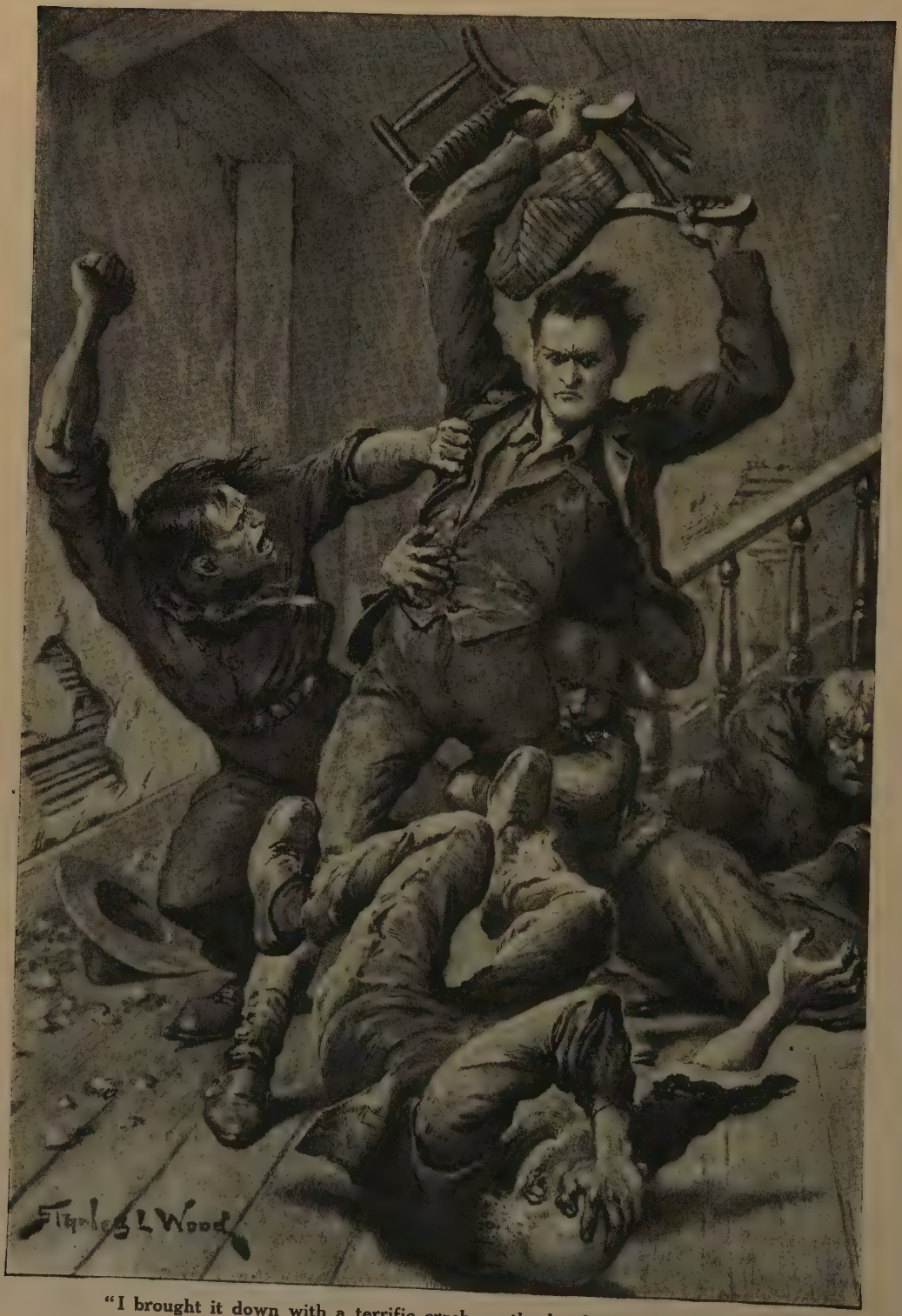
" Warned ? " Shores bent his sharp eyes on me and Sheriff Shepherd turned and looked intently toward me. " Who warned you ? " he asked in a strange voice.

" Parker himself," I said.

MRS. CROCKRELL TAKES UP THE STORY.

I watched my husband ride away that morning with a strange sinking of the heart. When he turned and waved " Good-bye," I instantly recalled the other fine, stalwart man who had ridden away and never returned. I resolutely tried to banish all my misgivings and went at once about my household duties, but the uneasiness remained. It even increased when, opening a drawer in his desk, I saw he had neglected to take his automatic with him. " He has neither dog nor gun," I said to myself in dismay. " Oh, what if he should never come back ? Nonsense ! I must put a stop to this. What could possibly harm him on the highway to Bristow ? Why, I'm childish."

I finished my morning's work and, taking



"I brought it down with a terrific crash on the head of the old man."

my sewing, sat down on the veranda to rest, but my eyes kept straying from my needlework. At last a horrible black fear had me in its clutches. The mournful baying of the bloodhounds, shut up in the barn, gave me nervous chills. I went out and spoke to them, trying to quiet them. They yelped with joy at the sound of my voice, and whined piteously to be let out.

By this time my nerves were in rags. I could not sew, and I threw aside my work and paced the veranda desperately. What *was* the matter with me?

Over and over again I felt that some dreadful thing was transpiring somewhere, and Morris was in deadly need of me.

Suddenly there came the rush of horses' hoofs through the gateway, and three men galloped up to the steps. One was the big sheriff from Bristow, whom I knew slightly; the others were strangers.

"Good morning, Mrs. Crockrell," the sheriff called out. "Where's your husband?"

"Good morning, Sheriff," I answered. "Morris has gone to Bristow."

"Gone to Bristow?" he repeated, blankly. "Why, when did he go?"

"About an hour ago—perhaps two hours," I replied.

I saw strange glances dart between the men. The sheriff turned his horse sharply, rode alongside of the others, and spoke in a low tone to a slim, dark man with piercing eyes. They conferred for a few seconds and I heard the dark man say: "Yes, you'd better tell her."

Tell me—tell me what? I was on the point of screaming when the sheriff turned back to the steps. "Mrs. Crockrell," he said gently, "this is Mr. Steven Shores, of Pueblo, Colorado." I bowed as the dark man lifted his slouch hat. "And this is Mike Murphy, my deputy." I bowed again.

"Mrs. Crockrell," he went on, "we came here to ask your husband to go along with us. I was intending to swear him in as a deputy."

"A deputy?" I echoed in stupefaction.

"Yes, we are hunting some criminals whom Mr. Shores has trailed from Colorado. We're warm on the scent and I wanted Crockrell to go with us. Are you *sure* your husband went to Bristow?"

"Why—why—of course," I stammered—"why?"

"Well, you see, Mrs. Crockrell," Sheriff Shepherd continued, "if he went that way, there hain't no reason on earth why we shouldn't have met him."

It had come! Terror and mystery swooped down upon me, enveloping me in black clouds. "Oh, I'm frightened," I cried, "I've been frightened ever since he went. He didn't take his gun and he wouldn't take the dogs." As if to prove my statement, there suddenly arose on the air a profound blood-curdling bay from the imprisoned animals.

"What's that?" cried Mr. Shores, quickly.

"The dogs—Castor and Pollux—the bloodhounds my husband got at Fort Smith a month ago——"

"Bloodhounds!" he ejaculated. "Let them out at once, Mrs. Crockrell. We'll take them with us."

I ran to the barn. The sheriff and Mr. Shores threw themselves off their horses and hastily followed me. I paused at the door. "Will one of you saddle my pony?" I gasped. "I'm going with you. It won't take me two minutes to get ready."

"I'll fix you up, Mrs. Crockrell," said the sheriff. Then I unlocked the box stall where the dogs were and let them out. They yelped with delight and fawned upon me.

"Are they used to the horse your husband rode?" asked Mr. Shores.

"Yes, yes," I cried feverishly; "they sleep in her stall." Then I ran to the house and dashed to my room. I threw off my gown, jumped into my riding-knickers, slammed a felt hat on my head, and was down on the piazza as they brought the pony round to the steps.

The dogs were already nosing the ground. I had snatched a coat of my husband's as I came through the hall, and now I held it to their noses. They sniffed and wagged their tails and yelped with joy. We all leaped into our saddles and were off. We rode fast, saying little.

"I'm inclined to think," said the sheriff, "that Crockrell took the short cut to Bristow—the 'Coon's Misery' road, it's called."

"But he never goes that way," I cried.

"There is always a first time," replied the sheriff soberly.

Presently we came to a fork in the road. The main road wound on to Bristow, the other led through a desolate piece of country toward black and frowning woods. Here we paused a moment. The dogs took the hard-scrabble road without hesitation. "I thought so!" I heard the sheriff say.

When we reached the woods and came in sight of a little brook, "Castor" and "Pollux" got frantic. They rushed here and there, sniffing the ground, to the brook, and then came back again, uttering yelps of excitement.

"I am of the opinion," said Mr. Shores slowly, "that Crockrell got off his horse here for some reason. The hounds seem to me as if they had caught his scent."

Suddenly a shout rent the air. The dogs answered it with a fearful bay and hurled themselves forward. "That is my husband's voice I hear!" I screamed. We tore after the hounds and, clearing the woods, I saw Morris fighting for his life on the steps of a wretched-looking house. I saw Castor and Pollux plunge at the people, I heard my husband's cry, "Take 'em, boys!" then I was off my pony and running to catch him as he toppled over.

When he had recovered and told us about the attack upon him, we all went into the horrible place, and here Mr. Shores quickly showed us the curtain of death.* But when Morris told us of the strange warning he had received—when he swore that Ben Parker sat in the chair and waved him back—we all looked at each other aghast. Even the cowering, sullen prisoners in the corner showed signs of weakening and the older woman shrieked hysterically.

"I have followed these people hundreds of miles," said Mr. Shores. "They had just such a place in Colorado, on a lonely, out-of-the-way road. People who travelled that way disappeared. The authorities suspected this family and made arrangements to apprehend them, but they took the alarm and fled. We searched the premises" —he paused a moment and added significantly—"as I am going to do now."

The prisoners stared at him as if hypnotized. I saw great drops of perspiration ooze out upon their faces. The old woman was whimpering and moaning in her terror. Mr. Shores pushed the table into the middle of the room, seized the piece of ragged carpet which lay beneath it, threw it to one side, and disclosed underneath a trapdoor. He paused and a grim smile stole over his granite-like face.

Next he went into the kitchen and returned with a lantern. This he lighted. Then

"I saw Castor and Pollux plunge at the people;

* The methods used by these people to dispose of their victims were almost identical with those used by the infamous Bender family, of Kansas. The Benders were low-class Germans, and ran a road-house between Oswego and Cherryvale, Kansas. They had a heavy curtain stretched across a room, and the guest was always seated with his back to this. One of the family stood behind with a heavy hammer and struck his victim on the head. When they were discovered, they suddenly disappeared, and were hunted for months before it transpired that they had been killed by a mob. The garden behind the Benders' house was found to be filled with the bodies of unfortunate travellers.—THE AUTHOR.

he lifted the trapdoor and, lowering his lantern, peered down.

His face had gone quite white when he drew back. He sank into a chair and took a long pull at his flask. "Look down there, Shepherd," he said to the sheriff. "Four of them! There were six in the Colorado cabin—ten in all!"

The sheriff glanced gingerly down and

I heard my husband's cry, 'Take 'em, boys!'"

hastily retreated. Mr. Shores lowered the trap. Then, with his automatic in his hand, he went over to the group in the corner. Putting the pistol to the head of the old man he said calmly: "Where is the money you took from Parker? Answer me, or I'll blow your head off!"

The man cringed and stammered and finally told him it was hidden in the hayloft in the barn. Mr. Shores went out and found it and brought it to the sheriff. By this time Mike Murphy was back with a crowd of infuriated men who were determined to hang the whole miserable family. But Mr. Shores and the sheriff held them off, exhorting them to be calm and to let the law claim its victims. I shall never forget that awful scene — the crowd surging up the steps, into the house, looking down at the horrors under the floor, examining the curtain behind which the dwarf stood to hit his victims in the head with the axe. Two or three brought a coil of rope from the barn and even threw it over the limb of a tree. But Morris stepped out before them and made an earnest plea. "Don't, boys," he said; "don't do this awful thing. Don't put yourselves on a level with these cowardly murderers. Give them over to the law. They almost got me, but still I can plead for them. Let them have a trial. I'm not speaking entirely for myself, boys, but if Ben Parker stood beside me"—he paused abruptly and glanced around—"he would urge you—just as I am urging—not to soil your hands with blood!"

My husband's plea had its effect. The prisoners were hustled out of the house and bundled into the wagon, and everyone, except Morris and I, left for Bristow.

We mounted our horses and retraced our way through the lonely woods. Morris pointed out the place where he left his horse to get a drink from the brook, thereby discovering the skeleton of Ben's horse. The dogs ran ahead of us, leaping and playing, very well satisfied with the part they had enacted.

"The ways of God are past finding out," said my husband, solemnly.

Three Asses in the Pyrenees

A JOYOUS JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE.

Recently returned from a big game expedition to Central Africa, utterly bored with the "everything-supplied-by-the-stores" atmosphere that surrounds the modern traveller, the Author yearned to test his wife's theory that romance and adventure still linger in the by-ways of old Europe for those who seek them diligently. Her idea was to go on tramp with a donkey-cart, camping out at night, and avoiding all such latter-day luxuries as hotels, trains, and motor-cars. Finally Mr. Walmsley came to us, and we commissioned him, with his wife and the donkey, to wander through the Pyrenees, writing up his experiences exclusively for THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE.

By Leo Walmsley

M.C., F.R.G.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

VI.

OLORON is one of the most interesting mediæval towns of the Western Pyrenees. It is built on the confluence of two noble rivers, the Ossau and the Aspe; it was once invaded by the Arabs; it preserves two very ancient churches and boasts of several extremely comfortable hotels.

I mention this not because we had arrived at Oloron, but just to give some idea of the place we were looking for.

It was late in the day, pouring with rain, and Blanchette was cross. Billy was on the verge of tears, and I was feeling anxious.

We were on the wrong road; that was clear. Had Billy not started, an hour before, to argue about something entirely irrelevant to the problems in hand, it might have been clear then; for this, instead of being a well-metalled motor road, was nothing more than a mountain track and was consistent only in one respect—it never ceased to lead upwards.

"It isn't fair to Blanchette," my wife remarked. "We've been climbing ever since lunch. We ought to stay here. We can't go on to the snow-line."

I had no wish to go on up to the snow-line, I protested. I wanted to see the two noble rivers, the two ancient churches, and one at least of the extremely comfortable hotels. To camp here on this windy hillside, with the clouds swollen fat with rain, and no firewood obtainable, would be suicidal folly. We must certainly go on—or go back.

Blanchette, however, refused to do either. She wasn't enamoured of the spot, she told us, in her peculiarly effective donkey language, but all things considered it was better than anything she had noticed since leaving Tardets, and it was probably better than the chilly heights above.

I was busy beating her when Billy shouted that she could see another road, not a hundred yards away, which led in a much more favourable direction. I climbed up on to the trap and looked. She was right, and a quick glance at the map showed that it was indeed one of the main roads to Oloron, and that after running parallel with our track for half a mile it shot off almost at right angles to it, straight down to the Gare du Aspe.

But how were we to reach it?

Between the two roads lay a patch of moorland, stony in parts, in others dotted with bracken or green with springy moss. There were no walls or hedgerows, but a ditch and bank at the edge of the track promised to be a respectable obstacle, even if I could persuade Blanchette to move at all.

Leaving her for the time being, we collected stones and heaped them into the ditch, until at last we had built a dam wide enough to take the outfit. Then I turned our donkey

round, pointed through the gathering gloom to the distant road, and spoke a word with a deal of urge in it.

To my surprise—No, I will not say that, for Blanchette was so accustomed to surprising us that we were only surprised when she *didn't* surprise us—she literally leapt that dam, sprang up the bank, and set off across the patch of moorland like a two-year-old, her ears flat to her head, her tail streaming out behind her.

It was a wonderful effort for an animal of her years. It would have been more wonderful still, I think, if she had taken the cart with her. But she parted company with that at the ditch, leaving it standing in an attitude which experience had taught us to associate with misfortune—with its shafts pointing heavenwards at an acute angle and its load scattered broadcast about it.

I never speak on such occasions ; I am the man of action. I leapt the ditch, sprang up the bank, and gave chase to the brute who had thus undone us. She had a start of fifteen yards. I had reduced this to ten when my foot caught in a clump of heather and I fell. When I rose again and got my eyes accustomed to the stars and liver-spots which filled the air about me, I saw her standing—still, very still, another fifteen yards away.

Anger did not prejudice my common sense. I approached her warily, speaking soothing words. She did not move.

" Whoa—whoa," I said aloud—and between my teeth, " only another six yards, you brute, and then I'll show you ! "

Still she didn't move, and I cried aloud : " Got you ! "

BLANCHETTE IN TROUBLE.

I had—and yet I hadn't. The reason why Blanchette remained so still was now apparent. She was standing up to her knees in a bog—a nasty, green, evil-smelling bog. Without making the slightest effort to extricate herself she was sinking, sinking, sinking.

I fear that at times I am too much the man of action, for, with little regard for the consequences, I stepped forward with the intention of seizing the bridle and dragging her out. But my right foot sank so suddenly that I had to swing my left foot round to keep my balance, and the next second I was well home in the morass, with the bog oozing evilly about my knees.

I made a savage effort to get out, but merely sank deeper. Then I seized hold of Blanchette's tail and pulled, but the net result was that we both sank deeper. The surface of the bog was now up to her body and almost up to my thighs.

Suddenly Billy's head appeared over the bracken, and she gave a cry of alarm.

" Don't do that," I cried. " Just try and keep cool. Get a rope. There's no danger—don't come a step nearer ; two of us is enough at once."

There was no danger for me, at any rate, for I could feel that my feet were now resting on something more solid. As for Blanchette, I was heartless enough not to care. She was far too fat to sink much farther.

Billy returned with the rope, and after the third try succeeded in throwing an end of it within my grasp. She held on firmly while I pulled one leg partially out and then, as I stood poised like a figure of Mercury, she gave a pull herself.

I suppose she thought she was acting for the best. The result, however, was that she pulled me flat on to the surface of the bog. I saved my face by a fraction of an inch, but the result from a spectacular point of view was distinctly effective, for my hands splashed at least a pound of the filthy stuff into my mouth, eyes, and ears.

I leaned back and tried to wipe it out with with my elbows—the only portions of my anatomy that remained clean. Then I explained to her that she mustn't pull like that again, but just hold on and leave the rest to me. She did so. I got my left foot out and planted it a little nearer to the edge of the bog. Then I did the same with my right and at last found myself on firm earth.

" Why did you do it ? " was Billy's first remark.

I scraped a quantity of bog from my eyes with a bracken stem.

" I thought it would be funny," I replied, hoarsely. " Let's get back to the trap. I want——"

" But Blanchette ? "

" Leave her—let her die. You *would* have it your own way. If I'd driven her into the river that day we left Bayonne ; if I'd poisoned her that second night ; if I'd—oh, let her die ! It's—it's only justice."

By this time, however, our ass had found the solid stuff underneath and had ceased to sink. She turned her head round and, with a pathetic protest in her foolish eyes, started to bray.

" That's it," I yelled at her, " bray, bray. Don't try to get out ; don't make any effort that might make your master and mistress feel happier. Oh, you—blank, blank, blank ! "

I sat down while Billy scraped the mud from my legs with a flat stone. Blanchette continued to bray ; and suddenly there came from the track we had left an answering voice.

We sprang up and hurried back. Coming down the hill was a man with a convoy of three black donkeys, each bearing a heavy-laden pair of panniers. He stopped when he saw me, raised his hat, and spoke. But he spoke Spanish. I could not understand him ; he could not understand me.

THE HELPFUL SPANIARD.

The trap, however, was eloquent of catastrophe, and when I pointed across the moor

he tethered his animals and followed me. He laughed when he saw Blanchette. He was evidently a good-humoured fellow, and one of enterprise, for he quickly went back to the track, unpanniered one of his asses, and fetched her along. He pointed to the rope and to Blanchette; then with his knife he began to cut a pile of bracken and heath. We helped him and in a few minutes we had a "bridge" of bracken leading from the edge of the bog to Blanchette's fore-quarters. I took the rope, cut it in two, and with my feet now scarcely ankle-deep, reached her. It is not surprising, perhaps, that she tried to bite me; gratitude was a thing unknown in her philosophy. I stuffed a handful of heath between her jaws as a gag, and had the ropes made fast to the wreck of her harness before she had time to spit it out.

The Spaniard then connected the ropes to his own ass and threw me a stick. I had been waiting with pleasurable anticipation for a chance of vengeance. The stick was a stout one—a beauty. I moved sideways a bit to give my arm good play and then, at the Spaniard's shout, I struck.

But before the stick had touched her, before the strain of the tugging donkey came upon the harness, she reared up her forelegs, brought them down with a resounding thwack a yard farther on, repeated the same manœuvre with her hind legs, gave a roll sideways—and pushed me off the bridge of bracken backwards into the bog!

Between them the Spaniard and Billy got me out at last. I don't know how; I don't very much care. I want to forget the whole business. They scraped me, and then we struggled back to the cart. Blanchette was still connected by the ropes to the other ass. She looked exceedingly ridiculous, covered with black slime. Both the Spaniard and Billy stood laughing at her. As for myself, I crept behind the cart and changed.

He was a good man, that Spaniard. He helped me to repair the broken harness, assisted to get our animal into it, and piloted me across the moor to the Oloron road. When I held out a ten-franc note he shook his head.

Perhaps, after all, he had had his money's worth!

We arrived at Oloron shortly before ten o'clock that night and halted at the first hotel. It was not one of the *très comfortable* of the French guide-book, but what it lacked in splendour it certainly made up for in the things that go to make a weary traveller feel at home.

It was fortunate that we found so comfortable a spot, for next morning Billy developed a temperature and a sore throat. By afternoon the fever had increased. I explained my fears to Madame. A doctor came and promptly diagnosed diphtheria. But there was nothing to worry about, he assured me; the disease was still in an early stage. He came again in an hour with an enormous hypodermic syringe and tubes of anti-diphtheric serum, which he calmly proceeded to inject into my poor wife.

It was an anxious night. Madame and Marie, the maid, were splendid. In the morning the fever was entirely gone and the throat about normal. It was a wonderful lesson to me in modern medical practice. In the ordinary way Billy would have been dangerously ill; as it was, in two days she was up, and laughing at the doctor's edict that we must not take the road again for a week.

It was a delay that had its compensations, for Oloron is a delightful place—clean, picturesque, and full of happy people. We might have stayed there for a month, had not the mountains, rising glorious beyond the town, lured us onwards.

Meanwhile Blanchette grew even fatter in the stables of the Hotel Pyrenees—fatter and lazier. The morning we left I had a terrible job to get her into harness, and a harder task still to get her to move. But once we got through the town and found the road she became more energetic and maintained a goodly pace for several miles.

We were no longer in the Basque country, and in place of the picturesque, white-walled, red-roofed cottages that had made the landscape so beautiful during the first week of our journey, one saw a gloomier type of architecture, reminiscent of Brittany and the north of Scotland. The people, too, seemed less prosperous—although the fields were rich enough—and lacked that genial courtesy which makes the country of the Basques so pleasant for the traveller.

Yet the landscape was charming, and the mountains were wilder and more glorious than those of the west, particularly the Pic du Midi d'Ossau, with its superb icy summit towering high above them all.

About four o'clock we reached a little village named Izeste, clustered on both sides of the river Ossau, and pitched our camp on a green sward to the south of it and within a stone's throw of the stream. It was the loveliest spot we had yet encountered, and Billy, in spite of her recent illness, insisted on our climbing up the slopes of the adjacent mountain in order to get the full effect of the sunset. . . .

We returned with a sharp appetite, and while Billy made a fire I put my rod together and whipped the river with such good purpose that we had half-a-dozen trout for our supper.

It was an evening to remember. The mountains black and clear-cut against a star-jewelled sky; the soft purring of the river, its rippling waters reflecting the lights of the village; the tinkle, tinkle of far-off cattle bells; the ruddy glare of the fire—all these things made up a memory that I shall never forget.

"'Don't do that,' I cried. 'Just try and keep cool.'"

The Gare d'Ossau is a deep and ever-narrowing valley which cuts straight in to the heart of the Pyrenees. Thirty kilometres east of it, and running almost parallel, is another similar valley, the Gare de Arrens, and between the two lies a mass of mountains. But over the mountains—from Eaux-Bonnes in the Gare de Ossau, to Arrens in the Gare de Arrens—a wonderful road has been constructed, a road which climbs in dizzy curves above the very snow-line and descends again like a mighty serpent into the hot, fertile valleys.

Could Blanchette do it ?

I was determined that she should. If the trap and its load proved too heavy for her, I vowed I would push it over some convenient precipice, select such of our equipment as was essential, and drag her to the top.

Of such stuff are travellers with a donkey made when they sit by a camp-fire and study their maps.

We stayed at Izeste for three days in order to give Billy ample time to recover from her sickness ; then we turned our faces resolutely towards Eaux-Bonnes, the famous watering place from which the Col' D'Aubisque road starts to climb.

But even this stage of the journey required no small output of energy on the part of our ass. There were two alternate routes and we, of course, took the wrong one.

It was hard going, and Blanchette, I am sure, would not have gone at all had she not been attacked by swarms of vicious horse-flies which only motion kept at bay. Even so her flanks were soon dripping with blood, and I had to keep constant guard on her with a bunch of bracken. Billy suffered from them, too, and as her clothing was thin she had perforce to wear two pairs of stockings and her Burberry buttoned tight to her neck. As the temperature was sometimes in the neighbourhood of ninety degrees her sufferings were great.

But as the sun lowered a cool mist crept down from the mountain and gave relief in that respect. When we reached Eaux-Bonnes this mist had thickened to a fog, cold, clammy, yet delightfully refreshing.

There was no question of camping out that night. Eaux-Bonnes we found to be a curious little township consisting entirely of hotels and boarding-houses, built along the sides of a small rectangular *place*. There is a pump-room where the invalids partake of the strong and smelly waters which give the place its name, and a Casino where they partake of other waters, equally potent but more pleasant of odour. The Casino boasts also a picture gallery, a movie show, and a gaming-room.

We put up at one of the hotels, and having eaten the worst cooked and most expensive meal since leaving Bayonne, went to the Casino to forget it, and to soak ourselves in " life " !

SEEING " LIFE."

Alas ! we found it not. The " movie " show was in the open air, and the fog was so thick, and the invalids so talkative over their *eaux-bonnes*, that we could neither see the screen not hear the orchestra.

The gaming-room was little better. Instead of a crowd of " vamps " and Continental crooks with the gambling fever aglow in their eyes, we saw a group of sombre, respectable invalids, most of them suffering from colds in the head, throwing handfuls of *sous* on to a green baize table, and listening with pained interest to the calling of an even more respectable-looking croupier.

It made us feel sad.

We went back to our " *très comfortable hotel* "—bath, constant hot water, lifts, telephones in every room—and amused ourselves by ringing up the office on our bedroom telephone and asking until midnight for just a *little* water, when, as the water had not come, we went to bed.

" Monsieur, it is not wise—to ascend the road. The mountains you see are hidden in clouds. There will be thunder undoubtedly. You cannot hope to ascend the Col and reach Arrens the same day. Be advised ; it is madness."

" But we have a tent," I said. " We shall sleep on the mountains."

Our friend—he was an invalid staying at the same hotel—opened his mouth like a fish.

" Sleep on the top—and madame with you ! Monsieur, you will both die ! Besides, your donkey will never get so far."

But he didn't know Blanchette. Neither did we, until that day.

It was eight in the morning. We had paid our bill. I had wired home for more money, and our ass and equipage were drawn up in all their magnificence at the hotel door. The French rise early. We had our audience, natives and visitors, all of them chatting loudly about the madness of our proposition. The weather indeed was not propitious, for the clouds, as our friend had said, hung low upon the valley and there was every promise of rain. But needs must when hotel bills prompt, and with a fine swagger I whipped Blanchette and we started up the *place* for the turn which brings one out on to the mountain road.

Our friend followed us for nearly a kilometre, until the road, crossing the boiling stream by a quaint stone bridge, began to climb. Then he halted.

" Monsieur, you will not be well advised ? " he pleaded. " You will not return to-night to Eaux-Bonnes ? See now ; it rains already."

It was indeed starting to rain, but with

"'Billy,' I said, 'we simply can't do it.'"

a dignified smile and a shrug of my shoulders I pointed upwards and cried :—

"Excelsior, Monsieur—the voice calling from the heights. Do you not hear it ?"

"Don't be ridiculous," put in Billy. "The horse-flies are starting again. Let's press on."

The road now began to steepen in grim earnest, and the gradient was such at times that I had to fall in behind the cart and push. Crossing and recrossing the leaping mountain torrent, it climbed out of the wet oak woods, reached an area of heath and bracken, and then entered a darksome forest of grand pines.

With the onset of the rain a wind sprang up and sent the drops spattering hard in our faces ; and while we rested in the middle of the forest a thick blanket of cloud settled down from the mountains, shutting us off from the world above and below, and enveloping the black trees in ghostly shrouds. I will admit that as we sat thus, the prospect of spending the night in our little tent on the summit of the Col' D'Aubisque brought no delight to my heart, yet, unless we turned back now, there was no alternative.

At the end of three hours we had left the forest, and the fog lifting for a minute showed us a vast amphitheatre, formed by the valley and an abrupt limestone cliff, down the face of which the stream fell in a frothy cascade. To the left of our view was the Col' D'Aubisque, to the right Mont De Ger, the summits of both hidden in the cloud, which fell again as swiftly as it had lifted.

The road climbed to the left, up the lower slopes of the Col, but its general direction was still parallel to the course of the valley.

I have said that we had never known the true nature of our Blanchette until that day. She proved herself a heroine ; not once during the first four hours of that awful climb did she stop of her own accord. It was not until one o'clock that we reached a stretch of level road, and it was here, at the valley head, that the route turned back again along the flanks of the Col. We halted and had lunch, making a fire with a wooden box we had in the trap.

It was still raining, but the cloud had lifted to the mountain summit. The valley formed an amphitheatre (*cirques* they are called locally) no less superb than the one we had left, but far wilder and more desolate. There were no trees, but on the sparse pastures vast herds of sheep were grazing. A few stone huts—built in the fashion of the Eskimos and evidently used by the shepherds at night—gave the only evidence of human habitation. We had not passed a soul since leaving Eaux-Bonnes.

It was too cold to idle long over our meal, and so we started on what we hoped was the final stage of our climb at two o'clock. The level stretch was only a short one. Although Blanchette tackled the gradients with fine spirit, we both pushed behind.

If this was the last stage of the climb it was certainly the hardest. The Col on this side is entirely devoid of trees, and the wind had freshened almost to gale velocity, howling along the bare hillsides and driving the rain like hail. Our shoes and stockings were soaking wet, and the steam rising from Blanchette's perspiring body was a fog in itself.

But the wind, strong as it was, seemed powerless to shift the cloud, which after hanging listless upon the heights for an hour, now swept down again and enveloped us completely. It was a weird experience. From behind the cart we could not even see Blanchette's hindquarters. We might have been alone in the world.

By three o'clock the weather had grown worse, and we were then on the most exposed part of the mountain side. The wind had changed completely round, and with increased velocity was doing its best to sweep us from the road over the awesome precipice.

Blanchette was tiring.

"Billy," I said suddenly, "we simply can't do it. We'd better turn back before it's too late."

We halted.

"We *can't* go back," my wife replied. "I *won't* be the laughing-stock of Eaux-Bonnes ! I couldn't stand it after all you said—'Excelsior,' and that sort of thing. Let's rest here—we can't be far from the summit—and then go on."

It happened that just at that spot there was a small clearing in the steep bank which rose from the right-hand side of the road, where the road-makers had evidently been quarrying ballast. It promised protection of sorts, and I turned Blanchette round, and walked forwards to explore it.

"I'm going to get a biscuit," Billy shouted. "Would you like one ?"

Without looking round, I answered, "Yes." I heard her climb up on to the trap—and then my eyes were almost blinded by a vivid flash of lightning.

Billy screamed.

I glanced back and saw Blanchette rise up on her hind legs, lunge forward, and set off madly down the road, Billy making a frantic effort to reach the reins from where she knelt on the top of the cart.

"Jump !" I shouted hoarsely. But in an instant she and the cart and Blanchette were lost from sight in the fog.

(*To be continued.*)

BALI—
Isle of Wonder

by DALE COLLINS

Ricefields—"gleaming sheets of golden water with the tips of the green shoots thrusting through."

A fascinating article dealing with a most fascinating place—Bali, in the Dutch East Indies. "Everybody is prosperous, and everybody is happy," says Mr. Collins. "The skies are clear and blue, the earth is fertile, you may wear rich cloths or a yard of cotton, and life flows along like a dream."

TOURISTS come to Java, commerce is busy there, but near at hand Bali sleeps unchanged and unchanging in her summer seas—surely the fairest and most fascinating isle in all the world.

In centuries long past, when Mohammedanism swept over the Malay Archipelago, Bali remained true to the old goggling gods of the Hindu mythology. So is it to-day. Bali does not bow to these new gods of progress and bustle; she dreams on as she was in the beginning, her ricefields golden in the sunshine, her twin volcanoes puffing at their giant pipes. Vishnu and all his brothers and sisters still fling about their many arms and legs, spirits lurk in the shadows of every *kampong*, men wear the *kris* and wager on cockfights, and miracles may still be seen.

Bali is the fortunate isle, and fortunate is the traveller who has been charmed by her beauties, and by the grace and picturesqueness of her people.

The entrance to a temple.

The island has a million inhabitants, of whom only three hundred are white, the majority of these being Dutch, as it is a Dutch possession. There must be nearly as many gods as there are people. Along every road are temples—dear, grey crumbling places where slim maids in bright *sarongs* burn little offerings of rice to the high gods.

You must not laugh at these odd-looking deities, for dignified Balinese gentlemen will tell you that they are very powerful. When the great volcano Batoer grew vexed and in place of smoke and rumblings spat out rivers of red-hot lava a prosperous little village was threatened by the sweeping torrent of death.

Sacrifice was made in the crumbling temple at the village gates, and behold! when the advancing stream reached the temple it stopped. No more lava came, and the village was saved.

"The gods were kind," say the Balinese gentlemen, and bow their heads a little. And this, mark you, is no tale of olden days but a happening of less than ten years ago.

Nor has the day of strange things fled.

This very year, while I sat in a tiny rest-house, all the dogs in the *kampong* (village) commenced to howl upon a note of terror. It was puzzling, but Bangoes Ktoot, my Balinese boy, explained it all quite simply. Out there in the *kampong* a spirit was prowling. It had the body of a dog, the head of a monkey, and eyes like the lights of a ship. I offered Ktoot a large sum—a whole gulden, which is nearly two shillings—if he would go out into the dark and bring in this strange creature for me. But the golden face of Ktoot blanched at the very suggestion, and his teeth chattered.

This same Ktoot, who knew much of the strangeness of this island of his, took me to the queer temple which is called Goa-Lowa. It was the usual wall of strange divinities, but behind it was a dark and ominous cave. The ear was puzzled by strange chirpings, and presently Ktoot flung a stone into the gloom. From the roof flew bats by the million, bats too numerous for any census; the air grew solid with them. These bats, said Ktoot, were spirits, each and every one of them, but stranger still was the fact that the cave they guarded ran right back through the heart of the world. Some said that at its farther end it emerged into the sea, but Ktoot was inclined to agree with those who claimed that it led to some unthought-of place, which had no connection at all with the sunny earth on which we stood.

There are ricefields on all hands in Bali. Precipitous hillsides are terraced for miles, valleys and plains are flooded, and everywhere, against the heavy green of the jungle, lie the gleaming sheets of golden water with the tips of the green shoots thrusting through. Cranes mince about, dragon-flies hover in the sunshine, while a rough plough, drawn by great humped sacred oxen and steered by an old man, tills the fields. Against the skyline groups of workers stand in bold relief like statues to stare at the white man as he goes.

The irrigation system is wonderful, and it was evolved by the Balinese long before the Dutch came. Water is carried for scores of miles in channels and wooden pipe-ways, and each village has its own committee which levies taxes for extensions and maintenance and decides when fields shall be watered.

Through all the East the girls of Bali are famed for their beauty. They are small and slim and graceful, winsome little maids modelled in gold. From childhood they are accustomed to carrying weights upon their heads, and this gives them a wonderful grace of bearing. Erect and lithe as reeds they are, and in their bright dresses they make beautiful pictures. At every well, on every road, there are gems for the brush of an artist.

To see them at the Feast of the New Year walking in procession along the decorated roads, wearing their gayest *sarongs* and bearing upon their heads great carved trays of rich fruits; to see them with long white wands driving their flocks of geese; to see them chattering and laughing together as they wash clothes in the chuckling waters of a stream bowered in greenery; to see them splashing and larking in the bathing-place at Tedjakoela, where a spring in the hillside gushes out through a hundred spouts of stone—these things are sheer joy.

But they are fairest of all when they dance.

I recall one dance in particular on a calm, still night, in an old temple, with the stars looking as big and bright as oranges. It was the New Year, and little offerings smouldered before the goggling gods. All the *kampong* had gathered to see the entertainment, and little nude brown babies scuffled with lean dogs, grave gentlemen chattered together, bright-eyed maids looked on, and disturbed doves in wicker cages cooed.

Presently there came men with great, scarlet torches which alternately guttered and flamed high into the velvet night. The players of the *gamelan* orchestra took their places. The music which they made may not be described—its charm was as intangible as it was magical, it had in it the very soul and spirit of the night and the place. The instruments were ordinary enough—brass gongs with mellow tones, tinkling silver bells and wooden and metal devices resembling xylophones, but something in the time and the manner of the playing lifted the melody beyond any music, civilized or savage, that I have ever heard. It was a miracle.

Into the fickle golden light of the torches came two little golden girls, dressed in cloth

of gold and crowned with golden head-dresses. They danced, and as the *gamelan* wept every move of their lissom bodies expressed grief; as the *gamelan* laughed their feet became symbols of joy, their heads tossed in abandon, their slow-moving arms trembled with delight. To and fro they wove, in that speaking dance of theirs, and in it and the voice of the *gamelan* and the glamour of the night was enchantment.

They told a tale in pantomime, and no Russian ballet ever executed a more graphic measure. A screen was drawn before the dancers, and when it was removed one little maid held a shining *kris*. The other had vanished, but upon a carved stool was a strangely sinister mass covered with an embroidered cloth. Every movement expressing suspicion,

Balinese dancers in gala dress.

This strange apparition upon the shoulders of the tiny miss gave a peculiar effect, which was enhanced as it advanced with strange, implacable gait upon the brave figure with the *kris*. She stepped aside from it, with the pride of courage, and there followed a battle between Beauty and the Beast.

Strolling players ready for a performance.

the diminutive warrior stepped up, drew away the coverlet, and revealed a gruesome monster.

It had a great, tusked head from which flowed long white locks trailing to the ground, and its evil eyes rolled wickedly.

The bathing-place at Tedjakoela, where a spring gushes out through a hundred spouts.

Though there was but little movement, the tale was unfolded as clearly as though it had been spoken. At first the champion was bravely conquering her fear of this strange monster; then she grew desperate and lunged and darted in. There followed an interval of quick alarm, and then the sudden resolve, the determined attack, and the striking down of the nightmare.

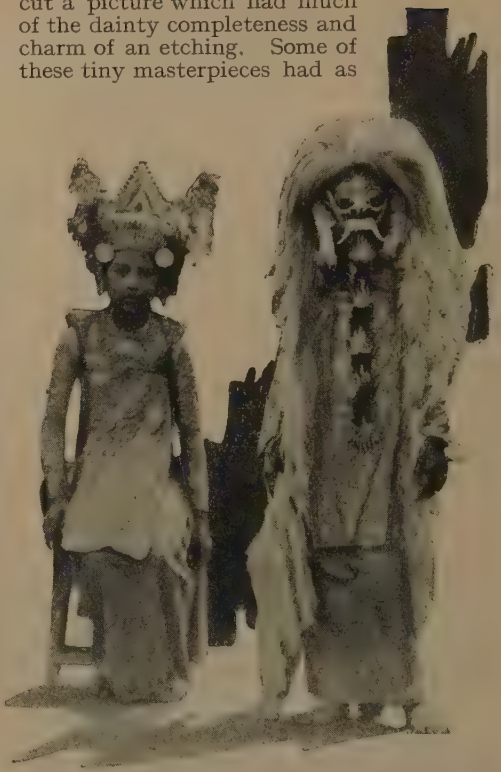
No wonder the little naked children raised shrill cries of joy and their elders gave a shout of satisfaction.

In the old temple by the light of the torches the little drama had been a triumph of primitive art.

The Balinese are a cultured people. As carvers they are remarkable, and their gods are all of their own shaping—no easy task, for they are many-armed and many-legged and ride upon strange beasts, as may be judged by a photograph on the next page. Working in their homes the women embroider rich cloths with intricate patterns in gold and silver thread which are much prized. Good specimens are eagerly sought by collectors.

I recall a visit to a Balinese artist which served as a striking lesson in the talents of these quiet brown men. He was sitting on the veranda of his hut, and in the grounds before him dogs yapped and fought, women were threshing rice, and fighting cocks glared at each other with red eyes from their circular wicker cages.

Mantra was the artist's name, and he was a dapper, suave little man, who spoke no language save his native tongue, and who had never been out of Bali. When we arrived he was carving a fan out of thin pieces of bamboo. On the tip of each leaf, in a space occupying not more than an inch, he had cut a picture which had much of the dainty completeness and charm of an etching. Some of these tiny masterpieces had as



The actors in the pantomime.

A picturesque Balinese sailing-craft.

Girl dancers at a temple. The Balinese girls are celebrated for their graceful dancing.

An open-air laundry.

many as three figures in them, all complete and shown in detail, and set against an elaborate background. The fineness of the lines was amazing, but when you saw the crudeness of his methods, his work seemed little short of genius. His only implement was a plain steel knife, and he traced no pattern, but taking a clean sheet, cut his picture with infinite care.

Nor was that his only talent. He had a book of hundreds of pages each filled with brilliantly-coloured designs of those strange gods of his, and all about were long strips of paintings in which the figures approached life-size. He was a wealthy man, as wealth is reckoned in that fortunate isle, and he would not sell me his pictures. But he graciously presented me with several when he understood that I admired them.

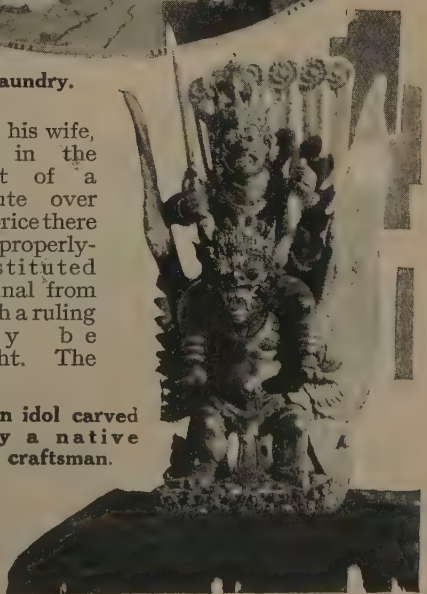
On the bench at which he worked was one strangely incongruous figure—a small plaster replica of the Venus de Milo. He was very proud of this example of the art of a land and a time of which he had never even heard. It had been presented to him by an earlier caller who had been impressed by his talent.

Mantra was not alone in his ownership of fighting cocks. This remains the most popular sport of Bali. There are great matches and great wagering, and men have been known to risk everything, even to their wives, upon the prowess of their birds.

Whenever you see a crowd of tiny carts, drawn by tiny ponies, pouring along a road, a-jingle with bells, and accompanied by a stream of pedestrians hurrying through the dust, you may be sure that a cock-fight is on.

The birds fight like furies, and usually to the death. The crowd gathered close about the ring urges them on with cries of encouragement, and the proud owners watch every feather with eyes keen for signs of weakness or victory. Wealthy men, particularly the Chinese merchants, will make single bets running into the equivalent of £100. No world's boxing championship was ever the subject of more thrills.

Marriage is a simple matter among these happy islanders. The husband buys his wife, and in the event of a dispute over the price there is a properly-constituted tribunal from which a ruling may be sought. The



An idol carved by a native craftsman.

Balinese youngsters.

price will often run as high as £5. Divorce, again, is free from technicalities. A husband can always take another wife, and a wife may divorce her husband by repaying the price he gave for her. If she attracts, and is attracted by, another man, happiness is within the reach of them both, provided the suitor, the bride, or her people possess the wherewithal to purchase her freedom.

Rich plains, hills clad in thickest jungle, endless vistas across miles of ricefields, sudden peeps at the sea through swaying palms, towering mountains rising to a height of ten thousand feet and by the ascent of which you pass from tropic heat to arctic cold, old crumbling palaces of vanished Rajahs—all these things are the happy setting for the brown-eyed, kindly Balinese.

Everybody is prosperous and everybody is happy. The skies are clear and blue. There is rice in plenty, the earth is fertile and repays the slightest attention with bountiful harvests, you may wear rich cloths or a yard of cotton, and life flows along like a dream.

Truly, Bali is the fortunate isle, but it is a witch of a place. We who have seen it once will never rest content until we hear again the anchor splash down into the harbour of Boeleleng, and see the little white pier and the long white road which will lead us back into the heart of that island of goggling gods.

Cock-fights are a passion with the islanders.

One of the many temples of Bali.

"Mrs Robinson Crusoe"

by

IDELLE S. MENG

ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. HILEY

A bride of only four months' standing, Mrs. Meng accompanied her husband to the loneliest islands in the Pacific—a little-known group of uninhabited *atolls* lying only a few feet above sea-level and a thousand miles from the nearest land. Here, with two men, three rabbits, and a dog "Friday," she lived for eleven long months, meeting with experiences that make most fascinating reading.

I.

LATE in the afternoon of October 21st, 1920, the last of our stores, with our canoe and small power-boat, were packed aboard the *Sanyo Maru*, a Japanese motor *sampan* or fishing-boat, which my husband had chartered to take us to our wee domain out in the Pacific.

Mr. Meng and I had been married only four months that very day. We felt that a romantic adventure was in store—a sort of renewal of our honeymoon — and gave little thought to the busy world we were leaving behind, with its comforts and conveniences. My husband had made up his mind to investigate the possibilities of copra production on some little-known islands, the Palmyra group, lying far to the south of Hawaii, and I had insisted on going with him.

The Authoress, Mrs. Idelle S. Meng.

About a hundred persons, either our friends or friends of the other members of our little expedition, were there to see us off. Some few business men who had shown a friendly interest in my husband's new venture were among the crowd. After many good wishes had been showered upon us, we scrambled aboard the crowded deck of the little sixty-five foot motor craft that was to be our home during the thousand-mile voyage.

The *personnel* of this venturesome expedition consisted of the skipper, whom we had engaged for the trip; Edwin Benner, a young Honoluluan, who was to be my husband's assistant in the copra industry after we had reached our destination; and Mr. Tullock, also a Honoluluan, who was only going down with us on a vacation and would return with the *Sanyo Maru* when she went back to Honolulu. My husband and I completed the list of white people, while there were in addition the five Japanese sailors, three rabbits, and "Friday," my wee brown pup. The rabbits had been given me by a friend at the last moment, while "Friday" I had purchased from an old Hawaiian woman an hour before I boarded the boat.

As soon as we cleared the harbour we tidied up the deck, put down our mattresses, changed into comfortable clothes, and were soon rolled in our blankets for the night.

The next morning found everybody sea-sick, except the skipper and the Japanese seamen, and so we remained for several days thereafter. As the *sampan* was built only for fishing, there was no cabin accommodation, so we moved our two double mattresses on to the top of the engine-house. With a tarpaulin tied closely over a ridge pole above our heads to protect us from the sun and rain, we lived, slept, and ate in that close cubby-hole for the rest of the voyage.

Save for a shower or two, the days and nights passed uneventfully until the morning of the sixth day. Then, early in the forenoon, we began to meet great flocks of

birds. Our spirits brightened considerably; we even had mental visions of sleeping ashore that night.

The skipper "shot the sun" at noon and reported that we were about in the correct latitude, but that we were at least seventy miles too far east; so we immediately altered our course due west. We had left Honolulu on Thursday evening and this was Wednesday noon of the following week. It had been estimated that we should probably reach our destination at the end of the seventh day or by noon on the eighth.

All that afternoon we strained our eyes toward the distant horizon, but no land appeared. Twilight faded and darkness settled down upon the little boat. Blacker than the night were our spirits. We were tired of our tiny abode on the engine-house, we were tired of our food—what little we had been able to eat—but most of all we were tired of hearing and seeing the ceaseless rolling waters around us.

Oh, for a bath! I had changed from a dress into khaki breeches and a blue shirt shortly after we left Honolulu, and had not had this apparel off since. The men were unshaven and looked like pirates.

A thousand miles is a long trip for a *sampan* to make; therefore a lot of motor-fuel was necessary. Our cargo took up so much deck space, however, that we carried as few drums of fuel as we thought we could manage with. Now after the skipper had measured the gasolene in the tanks and counted the extra drums on deck, he suggested to my husband that the motor should be stopped and the sails used instead. Mr. Meng agreed to this as there was a brisk, favourable wind, so the sails were set and we rolled up in our blankets for the night.

I was awake at intervals during the long dark night. There were dark heavy clouds over the moon, and not even a star showed its twinkle to cheer us along. Occasionally I would crawl out from under my tarpaulin, make my way to the bow, and sit with whoever happened to be on watch at the time. Great boobies—sea-birds similar to gulls—hovered over the boat, and two or three perched themselves upon the rigging and rested with their heads beneath their wings. One old bird added to the weirdness of the long night by a continual squawking.

At four o'clock my husband went to the bow to relieve Benner, who had been on watch for a couple of hours. I donned my sweater and joined him, as I found it impossible to sleep. We talked anxiously concerning our position. There we were, sailing along we knew not where. We had already logged more than enough miles to have reached the islands, but there was still no sign of land. My husband told me he hadn't a great deal of confidence in the skipper as a navigator, and that on the morrow he would get Benner to check up his figures.

Benner, though only a lad of nineteen, had been at sea for a year and a half in deep-sea craft. After he returned to his home in Honolulu, he had re-entered Punahau College as a senior. A short time before we left Honolulu he had read an account in the papers of my husband's plan to promote the production of copra on a group of islands south of Hawaii, and he persuaded his parents to permit him to give up school and accompany us on what promised to be an unusual adventure.

Benner had secured his papers as third mate on his last voyage, and had some splendid nautical instruments of his own; so we felt that his report on the position might be of assistance to the skipper. Therefore, at noon the next day, both of them took several "sights," and when they were worked out Benner reported that our destination lay at least a hundred miles behind, while the skipper's report showed that we were still headed toward the islands. This difference in the calculations was terribly disheartening to us, while some uneasiness was noticed among the Japanese.

Mr. Meng was at a loss as to which position to accept as the correct one. However, since we could sail west at any time without consuming fuel, while to go east meant using our precious gasolene, it was decided to take Benner's report as the right one. Should we fail to locate the islands after logging the necessary number of miles in that direction, we could cut out our motor and sail west. So the sails came down, the engine was started, and we put about.

All that afternoon and through the long night we pushed on into the wind. About two o'clock the moon went into total eclipse, and this peculiar phenomenon only added to the weirdness of the night.

We white members of the party had been so sick that we had eaten very little food since leaving Honolulu, but the crew had more than made up for our lack of appetite. Next morning, however, their big pot of rice and their dishes of tea remained untouched. There was much talking and wild gesticulating among them. Finally, Tokio-yama, their spokesman, came to my husband. "Meester," he said, "men plenty scare. They no lak white captain. They say islands no stop here; by and by we lost. They want to go back Honolulu."

"Tell them," replied my husband, "that we came find islands; we no go back till we *do* find them. I got plenty good gun; I make sailors work."

When I heard that conversation I nearly stopped breathing. It was a mutiny, of course! They always have them in sea-yarns. However, nothing more was heard from the discouraged men. The log was hauled in at ten o'clock, and by checking it

"'Tell them,' replied my husband, 'I got plenty good gun; I make sailors work.'"

with the report made at noon the day before, we found that we had travelled far enough east along our line of latitude. So, for fear we might pass the islands, we "lay to" until noon, when our position could be verified by the sun. During the time we drifted there we saw a few large sharks. This was promising, as it is said that these sharks are only found near land. No birds were seen, but we later learned that they always fish on the leeward side of the islands so that they can find their way back by flying into the wind.

Meanwhile Benner had been going over the skipper's figures, and discovered that on the day we turned west the skipper had used a wrong table in his nautical book. I know nothing about navigation; but from the impression I got it was a mathematical error. This fact was proved when both the men took their noon observations and worked them out. This time their positions varied only a few miles.

It was past twelve when we headed north to where the islands were believed to be. I kept keenly on the look-out for signs of land, and was rewarded for the hour or more that I hung to the mast in the hot sun by being the first to make out a dim outline along the horizon. I yelled, and was joined by the skipper, who had also seen this hazy object in the distance. After we had all had a squint through the glasses we were fully convinced that there was no mistake—it was really land. Much rejoicing prevailed among the Japanese as well as ourselves.

All eyes were strained toward the grey smudge ahead, which gradually took on the outline of waving coco-palms. We were approaching Palmyra, and would presently drop anchor off her emerald crescent. How I thrilled at the thought of landing on this coconut-clad *atoll!* Soon it lay before my eyes, calm, peaceful, and beautiful.

Many interesting tales, both true and legendary, cluster round Palmyra, and as we drew nearer I began to go over in my mind the facts we had gleaned. Lying in 5 degrees 40 minutes and 4 seconds North Latitude, and 161 degrees 11 minutes and 20 seconds West Longitude, most accounts erroneously place the islands in the "South Seas," whose northern boundary is the Equator. Fifty-two palm-covered islets go to make up the group, all of them together amounting in area to about eight hundred acres. The two largest islands are fifty acres each, while some of the smaller ones are only a quarter of an acre in size. The group spreads east and west in the shape of an elongated horse-shoe, encircling five lagoons. These lagoons range from six to thirty fathoms in depth. Around the group and following its outline is a coral reef, not more than one-fifth of a mile outside the islets. The crescent, or horse-shoe, formation of reef and islets opens toward the west. From this side only can a small boat make an entrance into the lagoons; it is also the only side of the group where a large vessel can be anchored in safety. It was from this point that we entered the little world that was my home for eleven long months.

Great sea-birds hovered over our *sampan* as we cruised slowly around hunting for a safe anchorage. They alighted fearlessly on the masts and the deck-cargo; while tiny white love-birds expressed their curiosity by continually fluttering their wings almost in our faces.

With some difficulty the motor-boat was lowered over the side and we tumbled into it with a few blankets and enough food for the night. With the exception of Tokio-yama, the Japanese were to remain on the *sampan*, while the rest of us, accompanied by our little four-legged companion, "Friday," went ashore for the night. After the skipper had given some final orders to the crew our little craft started on the mile-and-a-half trip to the islets.

In the clear crystal depths could be seen wonderful growths of coral which kept me in ecstasy. I have never seen such wonderfully-coloured fish, and such queer ones, as those that darted beneath our small boat; nor were sharks absent, their long, sinister-looking bodies darting here and there.

As we drew near to the islands we observed great clusters of white objects in the over-hanging branches of the trees by the water's edge. We commented upon this discovery and were at a loss to know what they were.

"Oh, the beautiful morning-glories!" said the skipper. "I have heard of large ones, but I never dreamed they were as large as that."

When we drew nearer, however, we found that "the beautiful morning-glories" were huge sea-birds on their nests in the branches.

After grounding several times on the top of coral-heads and shoals, we at last reached the outermost *atoll*, known as Home Islet. It was here that the only sign of habitation in the group existed. This was the shack built there by the owner of the islands, Judge Cooper, of Honolulu. My husband and his associates having taken a lease of the property, the judge had kindly given his permission for us to use this hut.

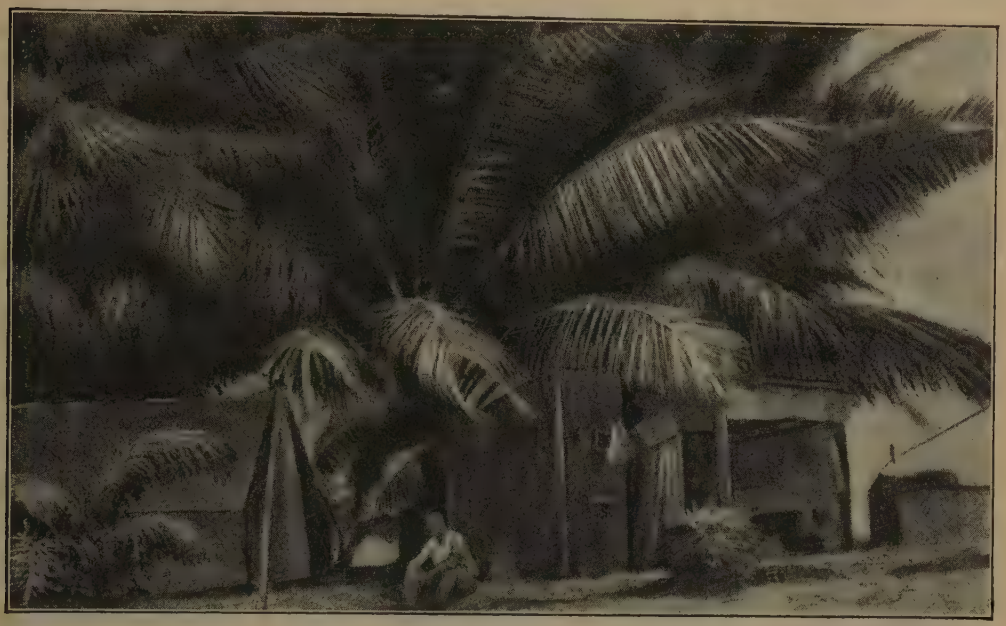
We tied our boat up and walked to the front of the lonely-looking, weather-beaten house. Silence prevailed except for the cries of the disturbed sea-birds. The rusty door-knob fell to the ground at a touch, and the swollen door refused to open.

The house consisted of only one room about twenty-two feet wide and twenty-four feet long. The roof was of corrugated iron, while unplaned boards formed the walls. The side walls were only four feet in height;

the space from the top of the wall to the roof was open, the broad, low-hanging eaves protecting the interior from the weather.

Benner climbed through this opening and forced the door, which promptly dropped from its rusted hinges.

We armed ourselves with some rusty cane knives found in the shack and then—carrying our flash lights, for it was now quite dark—waded into the shallow water to kill fish for our supper. Great schools of mullet were feeding along the shoals, and leapt out of the water at our lights as we



"Robinson Crusoe's" hut on Palmyra Island.

Odds and ends of camp equipment—tents, fish-nets, poles, axes, and so on—littered the floor. Several huge coconut crabs hid themselves behind objects and made a queer tapping noise by knocking their pinchers against the floor or the wall.

After exclaiming over each and everything in the house we proceeded to explore the island. We found it almost round, and covering an area of about three acres. Numbers of hermit crabs were everywhere. I had never seen any kind of crab that inhabits a shell before, so was much interested in examining them. It seems impossible that Nature has not given them a shell of their own; but so it is, and they hunt up the discarded shells of a certain sea-slug and appropriate them for their own.

In walking about the islands these queer, creepy things kept me frightened to death, as I constantly had to step over them and sometimes right on them. At my approach they would draw themselves into their rough shell houses, clench their pinchers across the opening, and roll over backwards. They would remain like this until everything became quiet; then they would cautiously come out and creep away with their cumbersome house trailing behind.

approached. It was a simple trick to throw our knives at them, and in a short time we had enough for our meal.

We found boiled, saltless mullet to be very poor food, but we broiled a huge coconut crab as well, and with pork, beans, and tea soon appeased our appetites. The coconut crab excels any crab or lobster I have ever eaten. It feeds entirely on the rich white meat of the coconut, which it gathers by climbing to the top of the trees, sawing or pinching the stem of the nut and letting it fall to the ground. Then Mister Crab crawls down and proceeds to bore a hole in the nut and extract the meat, using the first leg behind each pincher.

My first night in that shack was one long nightmare. The men spread their blankets on the dusty floor, while my bed was a large wicker chair. No human beings had been on the islands for three years, so the floor and furniture were covered with leaves and dirt. Nets, tools, and tents were the hiding places of hundreds of small grey crickets, which kept me miserable during the night by crawling over my face and neck, while the dying camp-fire kept the birds in a great state of excitement. Their weird squawkings, added to the noise that the hermit crabs

made knocking their shells against the house or against each other, made sleep impossible for me.

A box of hard ships' biscuits had been left on the floor, and a huge coconut crab stole one of them, taking it behind the door. We were scared out of our wits by the battering and banging of the cracker upon the floor as the crab made a noisy meal of it. Several times during the night I called my husband to my side to ascertain the source of some new sound.

The next morning the unloading of our supplies was started, but it was the third day before this job was completed. We knew nothing about the rise and fall of the tides and, by sad experience, found that unloading could only be accomplished at high tide. The first trip the motor-boat made out to the *sampan* it returned all right, but the second load was only half-way back when the little craft grounded on a shoal.

Mr. Tullock and Tokioyama happened to be the unfortunates in the boat. They dared not try to wade to shore as the water teemed with sharks; so there they stayed in the hot sun, without food or water until the tide began to come in again. This proved to be a valuable lesson; after that trips were only made during the first part of the high tide.

Meanwhile the Japanese aboard the *sampan* soon filled the ice-holds with fish,

to be sold in the Honolulu markets. Quantities of coconuts were also loaded aboard the vessel, and on the morning of the fourth day the *Sanyo* was ready for her return trip to Honolulu.

We took the skipper, Mr. Tullock, and Tokioyama out to the waiting *sampan* in our motor-boat and bade them farewell. Then the anchor was lifted and they departed, leaving two men, a woman, three rabbits, and a brown pup alone on the most isolated island in the Pacific Ocean.

Strange to say we felt no misgivings while

we watched the *Sanyo* pass out of sight. There was so much to be done toward getting our habitation fixed up, our stores put away, a partition erected in the little house, and a garden planted. After all this was completed explorations were to be made and then the real work of gathering cocoanuts and drying copra was to start.

We worked from daylight to dark, and in a few days were quite comfortably

"We felt no misgivings while we watched the *Sanyo* pass out of sight."

fixed. We made a clearing behind the house and planted a garden there. To keep the crabs out we put up two-foot posts all round the plot, and to these we nailed old corrugated iron roofing, placing it well into the ground so that they could not burrow beneath it.

This roofing, by the way, had an interesting history. Japanese bird-poachers had at one time lived on Christmas Island, a French possession located some two thousand miles to the south. When they left Christmas Island to come to Palmyra they stole this roofing from the shack of the Catholic priest who owned the island and brought it to use in building their new abode on Palmyra.

Here they caught and skinned the beautiful birds, and some sort of trading schooner brought them supplies and took away their feathers and skins. These feathers were shipped to Japan, where they were properly cured and dressed and went to America to adorn ladies' hats.

Many of the South Sea Islands were inhabited by poachers at one time, so Britain, France, and the United States sent war-vessels down and drove them from their respective territories.

When Judge Cooper bought these islands in 1911, he found the corrugated iron shack surrounded by twenty huge Oriental stone jars used by the Japanese for catching rain water. We found the jars invaluable for the same purpose. Palmyra is only five feet above sea-level, so our water supply must be caught when it rains; there are no freshwater springs. There seems to be no danger of anyone going thirsty as it rains abundantly; and as Palmyra has no mosquitoes our water was always pure and wholesome.

Although quite near the Equator the climate is delightful. Lying in the path of the south-east trades, and with no hills to keep the breeze off, it is always wonderfully cool. During the eleven months that I spent there we kept a complete record of the weather, and a glance at the condensed report shows what a perfect climate the islands possess.

How well I recall our first trip around the crescent of islets! Low tide occurred early in the morning, so we made an early start. Clad in knee-breeches, blue shirts, heavy shoes, woollen socks, and our straw hats, we started north across the shoals at the western end of the lagoons. We each carried a big cane-knife to discourage the sharks. We struck the outermost islet of the northern wing of the crescent and tramped toward the east.

Between the islets are channels leading from the sea into the lagoons. Some of these are only ankle deep while others are waist deep. We picked our way carefully in crossing these channels to avoid falling over the rough coral rocks. In stepping from one large coral-head to another we often saw the huge, ugly bodies of black conger eels coiled down between the two rocks. Ugh! They made my blood run cold! We skirted along the beaches of some of the islets, and went directly through the interior of others. Most of them were densely covered with coconut palms, birds'-nest ferns, and another large-leaved fern that is commonly seen in Honolulu. The birds'-nest fern grows on the trees as well as on the ground. Even on the very tall coconut trees it is often found near the top where it is shaded from the sun.

The foliage of the coconut palm is especially luxuriant on Palmyra. The leaves are long and very broad and entirely intact, as there are no insects to feed on them as is the case in and around Honolulu. The variety of coconut that grows on Palmyra is of enormous size. Specimens of these nuts have been sent to Prof. Beccari, of Italy, a famous botanist, who reports them to contain the thickest meat of any variety of coconut in the world. There are possibly two hundred thousand bearing trees on the islands; also a like number that are either too old or too crowded to bear. Beneath the bearing trees the nuts are stacked two to four deep. Some of these nuts are newly-fallen ones, while others have already germinated. Those nearest the ground have taken root and have shoots two or three feet high. The nuts on the young trees in their first bearing hung so low that we could reach them from the ground. We stopped on several islands to quench our thirst by drinking the water from the nuts after we had chopped one end off with our knives.

In crossing the shoals and channels we were kept in a constant state of excitement by small four-foot baby sharks which rushed toward us, attracted by the sound of the splashing water, as we waded along. The instant they heard the noise they would make a dash for us, leaving a wake behind them like a torpedo boat. Upon these occasions we would wield our wicked knives, dance a sort of impromptu war-dance, and let forth blood-curdling yells, and the poor sharks, in most cases, left us alone. When we sighted the black triangle that represented Mr. Shark's dorsal fin before he sighted us, we would either stand perfectly still until he passed us by or would look around for the nearest shoal and make a mad dash for it. Once on a shoal we felt safe, as Mr. Shark could not come into such shallow water. When a baby shark happened to get between Mr. Meng's feet on one occasion, Benner and I enjoyed the show very much from our respective shoals. Mr. Meng is tall and usually of dignified appearance, but when this vicious-looking infant took him unawares, his wild and rapid manipulations of his long arms and legs were anything but dignified. Our merriment was of short duration, however, for the shark suddenly turned in his mad charge and headed in our direction; and then my husband rushed to a place of safety and enjoyed *our* exhibition.

The tide comes in so rapidly when it starts that it is really not wise to take too long a "hike," so we had to cut back across the crescent, going between the beautiful lagoons and thence west to the home island.

The collecting of coconuts was started on one of the largest islets of the group, Cooper Island, lying about one and a half miles from Home Island. When low tide occurred in the morning the boys would take their lunch, walk over, and then return at the evening low tide. The tides are an hour later each day, and when tide occurred in the morning they would paddle over in our little green canvas canoe.

The first work they did on Cooper was to build the copra shed. The posts of this were the trunks of coconut trees cut into eight-foot lengths and sunk about eighteen inches into the ground. The roof was a double canvas affair, built of old sails we had purchased from a ship-chandler before leaving Honolulu. The frame-work was of the long slender pandanus palm, the back and side walls of the shed being made of coconut leaves several layers thick. The front wall was a loose canvas, easily put up or taken down when desired. Rough boards formed a platform about three feet from the ground on the inside of the shed. This was used for laying the meat of the coconut on for drying. "Smudges" were built beneath this platform, under a hood of corrugated iron to keep the boards from catching fire.

It was the beginning of the rainy season when we started the work on Palmyra, so it was necessary to dry the nuts by "smudge." Later, however, when the rains were less frequent, we began drying in the sun; this proved a quicker and less troublesome method.

The nuts were collected in piles on the islets and when the tide rose the canoe was towed along the water's edge and filled,

then transferred to the island on which the shed was located. The weather was closely watched and when conditions were favourable the nuts were split and spread on the ground to dry.

One blow from an axe was sufficient to lay the nut in half. Any water left inside was poured out; or, if the nut had germinated, the growth was removed before it was placed on the ground to dry. Pieces of canvas were kept handy to place over the nuts in case of a rain-shower. Fresh water causes the nuts to spoil, but salt water seems to have no effect on the meat. The nearer to salt water coconut palms grow the better. I have been told that coconuts are rarely ever found more than seventy feet above sea-level, and since Palmyra is so low it is especially adapted to their growth.

One of the "coconut crabs" that inhabited the island in countless numbers.

The third day of sun is sufficient to cause the meat of the coconut to shrivel and crack away from the husk. Then it is easily gouged out, placed on canvas, given another day in the sun, and then stored in the shed. It is now thoroughly dry and there will be no danger of mildew.

We soon found that it was necessary to watch the shed at night as the coconut crabs would get into the copra and take great quantities away. These crabs are huge monsters of a muddy red and murky purple colour, there being two species. They are often twenty inches across the back and weigh eight or ten pounds. They live in the birds'-nest fern, or in hollow logs of the giant heliotrope trees. Outside of their abode may be found a great pile of coconut husks in fine shreds which they have stripped from the nut in order to make a meal of it. Their pace is a funny one. I have often thought they resembled a slowly moving camel, swaying along with rocky movement. They move forward awkwardly when unmolested, but as soon as one annoys them they go into "reverse" and beat a hasty retreat backwards. In spite of their uncanny appearance they are one of the most toothsome delicacies I have ever eaten. Strange to say we did not tire of coconut crab as we did of fish, while we rarely went to the trouble of catching lobsters, although they were quite plentiful along the reef.

The lagoons and channels literally teemed with fish. Most of the varieties are edible, though if one were to take a notion to eat any of the vari-coloured species I am sure he would feel that he was eating the rainbow and would suffer from "painter's colic."

The huge "balloon fish" were most interesting. Upon being disturbed they would immediately inflate themselves to twice their normal size and roll around helplessly. Mullet, which sells at an enormous price in Honolulu, is probably the most plentiful of any variety found at Palmyra. They feed along the shoals and inlets and will go leaping like goats into the air when disturbed. Their leaps and bounds do not vary more than a few inches in distance and they are actually in uniform line. We often killed them by throwing our knives at them.

It was hard to determine which was the most interesting, the bird life or the marine life of Palmyra. After an exploring trip around the edge of the beautiful clear lagoons where, with my water-glass, I would gaze into the crystal depths at the myriads of interesting fish, I would decide that *there* was Palmyra's greatest charm. Then, after a stroll along the shell-strewn beach, from which all the feathered inhabitants of the islands could be observed, I would decide that such unusual bird-life existed nowhere else in the world. They were so unused to humans that they had no fear of us whatever; we could walk up to them and touch them as they sat on their nests. We took great pride in our wonderful aviary and never in any way harmed or molested them.

From the giant French frigate-bird to the tiny white love-bird they were all so new and interesting that I never tired of them

during my long stay among them. The frigate, or man-o'-war bird, as he is often called, is a lazy old fellow. He will not fish for himself, but will lie in watch for the boobies, and pounce upon them when they return with a fish-laden pouch. Sometimes these frigates can be seen, a mere speck in the blue sky, soaring like an aeroplane among the clouds. Suddenly they will make a straight downward "nose dive" upon some unsuspecting booby, and relieve him of his food. The booby feeds entirely upon flying fish, which it catches from thirty to forty miles at sea. He carries it in his big pouch in front of his stomach. When he gets hungry, or when he wishes to feed his young, the fish is forced up into his mouth. He then swallows it or else thrusts it down the gullet of the baby booby, whichever the case may call for. When the frigate attacks Mr. Booby he tries manfully to fight back, but the fight is such an unevenly matched one that he soon gives up by disgorging his food. This the frigate usually catches in mid-air. Sometimes there is a little competition, as perhaps, before the frigate can fly beneath the booby and catch the fish, a second frigate, or even a second booby, will swoop in and go off with the spoils.

So many people have doubted the story that love-birds balance their eggs on a single branch of a tree that I hesitate to make the statement, but it is nevertheless a fact. Often the limb is no thicker than one's two fingers; and yet the egg is laid there and the mother bird sits on it until it hatches! The little bird then occupies the limb until he is able to fly out to sea and fish for himself. These birds are very pretty, with black beady eyes outlined by white feathers. They are small, and fly with a great deal of wing-flapping. Not only their eyes but their beak and feet are black, so that the contrast with their plumage is very striking. I had often seen these little creatures on ladies' winter bonnets, but never knew what kind of birds they were till I went to Palmyra.

The curlew is the only edible bird on the islands, and we often trapped them for table use. In the early morning or evening their long, plaintive cry was heard as they called to their mates from one islet to another. Two species of tern are found. One species is a sooty colour, with a white spot on his head, and nests in the trees; the other, which nests on the ground, is black with a white under-body. The latter we refer to as the "evening dress" tern, as his white markings were similar to the white shirt-front of a gentlemen's evening apparel. This "evening dress" fellow furnished us with the only eggs we had while on the islands. They lay by the thousands, in colonies, on the white sand. In gathering the eggs we broke only one or two, and if they were fresh, all the rest in that section would be the same. However, the laying season was only of six weeks' duration, and after that time we had no more fresh eggs until six months later, when they would lay again. When the eggs hatched the ground would be so covered with tiny fluff-balls that one had to be careful in walking around them to avoid stepping on them.

One of the most valuable island foods was the coco-cabbage, or heart of the coco palm. It is that part of the tree that is found where the leaves join on to the body, and is obtained by cutting down the tree, splitting the head of it, and taking this white tender heart out. Since the trees are entirely too thick for proper bearing on the islands, we did not mind cutting some of them down for food. When this heart is boiled it is similar to cabbage or asparagus, and when fried tastes like mushrooms or egg plant. This was the only green food we had. The garden we planted never flourished, as the soil had too much lime in it and was too near the salt water.

(*To be concluded.*)

The Six Feathers

by H. C. OSBORNE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE

The unfortunate experience that befell a New Guinea trader who essayed to smuggle the forbidden bird-of-paradise plumes out of the country. "The story is absolutely true," writes Mr. Osborne.

IN the office of the Resident Magistrate of the Western Division at Daru, in British New Guinea—or Papua, as it is now called—there are six magnificent bird-of-paradise plumes adorning one of the walls. This story relates how they came to hang there for any traveller to that far-away land to see, and may serve as a record and a warning to unsophisticated settlers not to indulge in dreams of making fortunes by illicit means. To me, however, the memory of them is gall.

The Papuan Bird-of-paradise Act not only forbids anyone to shoot these lovely birds, but also prohibits the possession of one single feather. The penalty for the infringement of this Act is, in the first instance, a fine up to a hundred pounds, and, for a second offence, twelve months' imprisonment without the option of a fine.

At the time of which I write, some twelve years ago, the white population of Daru, the smallest of the three settlements, numbered only twelve persons, and in the whole of the Western Division there were under twenty whites. These consisted of a Resident Magistrate, a Collector of Customs, a missionary, and three storekeepers. The remainder, myself included, were recruiters and traders.

It was with X——, a fat Frenchman, that I first started smuggling *amura*, or bird-of-paradise feathers. We did pretty well, too, getting away a small number every time the *Merrie England*, the Papuan Government steamer, came to Daru. Sometimes we concealed *amura* inside native drums, and sometimes in *dibas*, bushmen's conical wicker headpieces. It would scarcely be thought possible to hide twenty bird-of-paradise plumes—worth to us from three to five pounds each—in a bundle of arrows, yet we did it more than once, and on one occasion B——, the Resident Magistrate himself, carried them under his arm for us to our friend aboard, with the Collector of Customs besides him examining the arrow heads! Part of our plan was to employ rare curios as a cover, so as to attract attention to their exteriors, and our "friend" was known to be a keen collector of New Guinea curios. When the *Merrie England* arrived at a certain port in Australia, it being a Government vessel, an officer from her could go ashore without being searched.

After a year or so of this petty smuggling I became ambitious and determined to go after bigger game. My object was to collect a large number of plumes and take them over personally to Belgium, thus doing away with middlemen and getting larger profits.

With this object in view, I took up land and built a house and trading station. I chose as a location the island of Domori, situated a hundred miles up the Fly River, well out of the way of the ordinary routes of patrol officers or other officials. Using this place as a base, I recruited "boys" and traded in my fourteen-ton ketch *Tetebe*, at the same time accumulating *amura* in large quantities. These I bought from the natives with articles of trade.

The plumes I had at my house were worth four thousand five hundred pounds, at the least, but I wanted to collect two thousand plumes before I took the plunge. These had cost me about a hundred and eighty pounds.

One morning I arrived and anchored in Daru Roads at six o'clock, and went ashore to have breakfast with my French friend. He was in his store when I arrived, but as soon as he saw me he took me aside and said:—

"You got some *amura* in boat? Suppose so, you go burn him quick. Government, he been search house belong me and house belong L——. He try catch we fellow now."

"No; I haven't any in the boat. I shouldn't be such a fool," I laughed back.

But then a horrible thought struck me. In a box of my dirty clothes, at the house of B——, the trader, were six plumes I had obtained on my previous trip. I was suffering from a bout of malaria, and B—— had kindly put me up and looked after me. When I recovered and left, I had forgotten them; I decided to go at once and get rid of them, in case B——'s house was searched. I went immediately, and found them there safe enough. Wrapping them up in one of my black silk shirts, I went into B——'s kitchen intending to burn the lot. But B—— himself was there, cooking his breakfast, and as I did not dare to trust him with such a secret, I had to give up the idea, and decided to go and burn them at Julian's. I told B—— I had come for some dirty clothes and, hastily taking some out of my box, I made a big bundle of everything and went back to Julian's. As I came up the steps leading on to his back veranda, I heard S——, the new Collector of Customs, talking to Julian. I slipped off my shoes and went noiselessly in my bare feet into the kitchen. The fire was out!

What could I do now? I could, of course, take the plumes and burn them on my boat, but I could not go straight away without arousing S——'s suspicions, as he had evidently seen me come ashore, and had heard from Julian that I would be back in a minute or two. So I sauntered in and threw my bundle on the floor, saying to Julian:—

"I've got some dirty clothes here you might get somebody to wash for me before I leave again."

"All right; leave them there," rejoined Julian.

I said good-day to S——, seated myself on an empty meat case, and yarned about my trip till the collector got up and departed. When he had gone, I picked out my black shirt, with its contents, and went down to the shore to my dinghy, which had just finished unloading. As I drew near it I heard a whistle go for the police whaleboat's crew. Something made me stop and pick up two large stones as I got into the dinghy. I did not like that whistle; it sounded ominous. When I was half-way out, I spied both the Resident Magistrate and S—— seated in the stern of the whaler, which was also heading for the *Tetebe*.

"Hurry, hurry!" I shouted at my Parama crew. "Fire stop in boat?"

"No, white man, the fire is out," they answered. I cursed my luck.

As soon as we got alongside, I dived down into my cabin with the black silk shirt and the two stones. Snatching up my pillow-case I shook out the pillow, stuffed the shirt containing the six plumes down into it, and then the two stones, and was looking round for a bit of twine to tie up the mouth, when I heard the whale-boat coming alongside. There was not a second to be lost! I leaned over, putting the cabin hatch between myself and the whaler, silently dumped the pillow-case and its contents over the side, and watched it sink down out of sight. I had got rid of the blessed *amura* at last!

"I've come aboard to search your boat for birds-of-paradise," called out S—— officially, a second later.

"Right-o! search away," said I; "you won't find any."

Down he went into my cabin with a sergeant of native police, while B——, the Resident Magistrate, took a seat on the cabin hatch. I looked down through a porthole a little later, and saw that S—— had taken all the bedding off my bunk and was examining the boards underneath. Meanwhile the Resident Magistrate commenced to question me about my recent trip, so I sat down and yarned to him. He was not a bad fellow, and I could see he was uncomfortable over the whole business.

After half an hour S—— came up on deck again, looking very hot and dishevelled, but still bent on finding something to incriminate me. He took a step towards the hold, and some mischievous impulse prompted me to pretend to get very uneasy. Down he went into it like a shot!

He was fully three-quarters of an hour down there, turning over everything; he even took up the flooring boards and some of the stone ballast. His clean white ducks were covered with black slime when he reappeared, and both B—— and I roared with laughter at him.

"I can't find anything," he said to B——, crestfallen.

"All right, then; we'll get back," replied the Resident Magistrate.

We were waiting for the whale-boat to be manned, and B—— had just asked me to come ashore with him, when, happening to look round, he suddenly exclaimed:—

"By gad! Look at that shark!" He pointed to a white, triangular object about fifty yards away.

I looked—and nearly dropped dead. It was not a shark at all, but the corner of my white pillow-case, filled with air, floating calmly on the top of the water! After nearly an hour and a half, the air inside the pillow-case, combined with the action of the tide, had worked out the stones. The pillow-case, now unencumbered, had risen again to the surface owing to the air inside. Had I been able to tie up the mouth as I intended, this could never have happened.

S—— must have been watching me, for he was smarter than I gave him credit for, and immediately ordered the whale-boat to bring the object on board. My only hope now was that the shirt and contents had dropped out as well. But my luck was out.

Presently the coxswain of the whale-boat

placed the dripping object at S——'s feet. He stooped down and shook out the shirt, unwrapped it, and there, on the deck, lay six wretched, bedraggled bird-of-paradise plumes! And for these I had lost the chance of at least a thousand times as many pounds!

My name was on both the pillow-case and the shirt.

I received the summons that same day, and then, indeed, S—— had the laugh over me! In due course I appeared before the Resident Magistrate, charged with the three following offences :—

That on May 11th, 19—, I had—

(1) Bought and traded in birds-of-paradise.
(2) Six plumes of birds-of-paradise in my possession.
(3) Intent to smuggle plumes out of the country.

I pleaded guilty to the second charge, but not guilty to the other two. My defence to the first was that, as I had only arrived in Daru at 6 a.m. on the said day, I could not possibly have bought or traded in *amura* on that day. S—— saw his mistake at once, and jumped up and withdrew the first charge. In prosecuting for the third charge he read out a lot of surmises, but could not extract any admission from me, so I got out of that charge as well. In fact, I think S—— only put it in to try and pump me as to our means of getting *amura* away.

B—— fined me fifty pounds on the second charge, and I paid it on the spot, as I wanted to get back and make a bolt with my fifteen hundred *amura* at Domori.

As B—— handed me my receipt for the fifty pounds he said :—

"Osborne, I want you to give me your word of honour that you will burn or otherwise get rid of any more plumes you may have in your possession."

I was silent.

"I looked—and nearly dropped dead!"

"Very well," he continued, "if you don't, I am leaving Daru immediately in the *Nivani* for Domori, and I will have your house thoroughly searched. Should I find one single feather of a bird-of-paradise there, you will be charged with a second offence against the Act, the penalty for which, as you know, is twelve months' imprisonment."

What could I do? The *Nivani*, a Government schooner, had motor power against the *Tetebe's* sail, and would therefore reach Domori long before me. So I gave him my word.

I left Daru the next day. On arriving at Domori, I found the *Nivani* anchored there, with the Resident Magistrate aboard. B—— was taking no chances, and had come to make certain that I would carry out my promise. But he opened his eyes when he saw the men of Domori dancing the next night. Every man there wore a head-dress in which were a hundred or so *amura*, with others stuck into his armlets, waist, and knee-bands. I had traded the whole of my one thousand five hundred plumes to the natives for a coconut apiece!

The COUGHLIN KIDNAPPING CASE

by

Katherine Mayo

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON.

The story of what is surely the most amazing man-hunt in the history of the American police. The thirteen-month-old baby of Mr. and Mrs. Coughlin was stolen, and thereafter every kidnapper and blackmailer in the States, apparently, wrote to the distracted parents offering to restore the child on payment of heavy ransom. The police and private inquiry agents appeared to make no headway; they even suspected the anguished young mother of having herself made away with her baby! Finally the aid of the famous Pennsylvania State Police—a semi-military body resembling the North-West Mounted Police of Canada—was solicited. The whole force concentrated its energies on elucidating the mystery, and things began to happen right away. The first instalment narrated how, after the baby disappeared, it became evident that a man calling himself "The Crank" was the abductor. Sometimes writing and sometimes telephoning, this mysterious individual at length instructed the anxious father to take a certain train on a specified day and throw out a parcel of money when he saw a white flag beside the track. Thereupon the police investigators became exceedingly busy.

YOU CAN NOW READ ON.*

II.

NEXT morning, Saturday, July 31st, Major Adams and Captains Gearhart and Price boarded a local train on the Reading line for Atlantic City *vid* Camden. They had already re-discussed their earlier plan, pertaining to another locality and road, and had decided to adapt it to this new development. Now, distributing themselves separately through the train, they read their papers till Camden Station blocked the light.

Thence, very quietly, as the deliberate local halted on its way, each one of them began to take notes—notes of the nature of the country along the sides of the track. And they studied time-tables with exceeding care. Four times, no less, did they repeat that reconnaissance.

Sunday morning they spent in conference together in a Philadelphia hotel. Each man pointed out the spot that he, in "The Crank's" place, would choose to hang out his flag, considering as the factors opportunity for escape, probability of interruption, danger of observation by track-repairers, and so on.

And the fact that the three argued to three different conclusions only proved further the difficulty of their task.

Then they charted the route, leaving out of consideration all settlements and stretches of open country and dealing only with tracts of woodland or brush. Then divided the territory thus remaining into zones—eighteen zones, sometimes continuous, sometimes not, varying from seven-eighths of a mile to five miles in length.

Said Adams, his pencil rapping the map:—

"If I were our friend 'The Crank,' I'd pick Zone 13, this five-mile stretch from Ellwood to Egg Harbour. And here are some of the reasons why:—

"Zone 13 gives a four-mile tangent of straight-away view up and down the track. It also gives excellent cover from which to observe that view. He's got to have such a place. Then, the track repair is finished here. He'll see no labour-gangs around. And he has a long walk to get out again,

* "To the best of my knowledge and belief," writes the Authoress, "the story is exactly true. I think that the Superintendent of the State Police would also say that it is accurate. All names of persons and places are the actual names in the case, and all dates are correct."

which makes his trail less open to checking. Zone 13 is my guess."

Said Price: "I don't agree with you, sir. Now, if I were 'The Crank' . . ." and then proceeded to excellent reasoning in support of another point of view.

"We can take no risks on any ground so logical," said Gearhart. "What about this little bit down here?" And he began on the strategy of still a third sector.

Which brought them, in the end, to reckoning the number of men necessary to the whole job.

Seventy had been their figure after the first reconnaissance of the road. Then eighty-five, then ninety-two. Now Adams exclaimed:—

"Fifty-eight miles, by patches, to cover! It looks almost impossible. Therefore we'll make it a certainty. Gentlemen, a hundred and ten men. Now we're off."

Fifteen minutes later he had accomplished his next move—found a certain one-time trooper of the Force, later infantry captain in France, now a prosperous Philadelphia merchant. Adams and "Billy" Morgan in the earliest days of the Force had been comrades in the hard-bitten ranks. When Adams was captain of "A" Troop, Billy Morgan, as sergeant, had been a right-hand man.

"I want a quiet, inconspicuous place, here in town, to rendezvous a detail," said Adams to Billy Morgan.

The erstwhile sergeant gazed up at his old commander with hungry eyes. All he said was:—

"Would our Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall do, sir? Over on Arch Street?"

"Right," said Adams, "the very place! We'll use it to-night."

"Very well, sir," said the prosperous business man, wishing his prosperity in Hades.

So, a little before noon on Sunday, August 1st, Troops B, C, and E of the Pennsylvania State Police, these being the easternmost and the central Troops, received orders to dispatch to the tryst their specific allotments.

"Plain clothes, and men will not wear their best, as there may be occasion to go into woods somewhere."

No other indication did they get as to the nature and purpose of their work.

In the manner specified, so came the men. Not waiting for the midday meal, then about to be served, some dressing as shabby labourers, some as young loafers, cheaply smart, some as decent, self-respecting citizens, and all in face and carriage solemnly bearing out their several parts, the detachments from the three Troop barracks shot out at the call.

But barracks reserves alone could not supply the full quota. So, in each Troop's case, men on substation had to be drawn as well, with the result that, all through the later afternoon and early evening, inconspicuous figures, lonely or in pairs, trudging along the streets of Philadelphia, gravitated to the door of that obscure Veterans' Hall, entered, and disappeared, while not one thought of comment stirred to action in the mind of the idlest neighbour nor of the policeman on the beat.

When, at ten o'clock in the evening, Major Adams, Captains Gearhart and Price, Mr. Coughlin, and Mr. Larzolere entered the hall, the whole round number, to a man, saluted them.

THE MAN HUNTERS.

An assembly less significant as to bearing and array never met the eye. For pure dull mediocrity or sub-mediocrity in all its unemphasized drabness nothing farther could be pictured. But for keen, luminous alertness, as the men, snapping to attention, listened to their orders, the last word stood there incarnate.

Now for the first time they were hearing why they had been summoned. With chiselled clearness their Commander explained his immediate plan and their duty therein; how they would be allotted, each to his zone; and how the white flag of the kidnapper would rise in one of those zones to a certainty.

"In a murder we send out three men. But here a life is at stake—*a baby's life*," he said. "Keep that foremost in your minds. Every possible contingency has been foreseen and provided for. No chance of a hitch remains unless some one man falls down absolutely. If the flag is raised in your zone, and you fail to get the man that raised it, no excuse will be good enough."

Did they want an excuse? Every lad on that floor, more than he asked for life itself, asked Fate to grant him just one little chance at the reptile that makes capital of mothers' love and babies' suffering.

The Commander looked down upon them with pride in his heart.

"The man that captures the flag-raiser," he added, "gets thirty days' leave, as a token."

But he smiled as he said it, as a man may smile at innocent folly.

Meantime, another thread had been weaving.

That afternoon, as the first lot reported in Philadelphia, a selected twelve men were summoned into the presence of Captain Gearhart. Briefly Gearhart explained to them the shape of the case, and of the task before them.

"Now, boys," he finished, "you know your main duty. Captain Price will take you out over the Atlantic City Railroad, giving you your final instructions. You are to act as guides for the others in the morning. This fellow will appear to-morrow,

somewhere between Camden and Atlantic City, with the flag. *He will not get away.* Do you hear me ? "

So, as directed by Price, the twelve entrained ; not all at Philadelphia, mind you, but scattering along the road, each buying his own ticket to his own post. At last, as Camden Station fell behind, the whole thirteen sat aboard—thirteen lumps of unnoticeability.

" What dull young men ! What dull lives ! " you might have thought, had you thought anything at all concerning them.

But as the engine paralleled the farther boundary of Zone 1, Price spoke gently to the man beside him.

" There begins your zone, Corporal," he said. " Get the picture of it into your head. On the spot make yourself thoroughly acquainted with every feature in it. Find the best hiding-places for the men who will come to-morrow. Trace all trails, and be ready in the morning to tell the officer in charge of Zone One's detail exactly where each of his men is to go."

Then as they reached the station at that zone's farther end, Price, dropping his first man off, moved to a seat beside the next to go ; and repeated the process till the last zone to be surveyed had duly received its scout.

After which, returning straightway to Philadelphia, he made for the Veterans' Hall.

The men, as he entered, fairly drank him in. Knowing personally every trooper in the hall, Price now proceeded to assign them by name, and in groups, according to his own shrewd judgment, till the list and the map checked together.

" You have a fine section—a very likely spot. Up on your toes with you ! " he told each detail privately.

And, the rascal, most thoroughly did he impress upon each and every detail commander that the great event was morally certain to come off in his own particular province.

FINAL ORDERS.

" Now, then," he finished, to the lot, " each of you has a time-table. On each of those time-tables the zones are marked. The train that ' The Crank ' is looking for, the 2.10 express, will run, from Camden on, ten minutes behind the schedule. On the schedule of the 2.10 will run, instead, a train consisting of an engine, three baggage cars, and a combination car. You will watch that combination car. As it passes your zone, if its windows are blank, you will know that ' The Crank ' and his flag are farther ahead—that the train has not yet passed him. You will then move up on the zone next beyond you, surrounding it. If, on the other hand, you see in a window, as the train passes you, a white card carrying the number of the zone next behind you, you will immediately leave your post, running back to surround that zone. But if the number shown on the card is that of a zone more than one remove back, you will return quietly to the nearest railway station and take the next train home. We wish to attract the least attention possible."

Then, after midnight, Price left them, to take till morning such rest as the excitement would permit. None of them had eaten since noon, many of them not since breakfast. Scarcely would they taste food till the job was done. Food could not be brought into the hall, neither must any one of them rouse the slightest attention anywhere outside.

Absolute secrecy, you see, was the core of success. One thinnest vapour of suspicion afloat, one little syllable breathed to the eager huntsmen of the Press, and their whole plan was ruined, the criminal for ever lost to justice, the last chance of the baby's life sacrificed. If little Blakeley still lived, in the hands of " The Crank," he would draw his last breath the moment his captor learned of the net now closing in upon him.

Meantime as to those twelve scouts in the wilderness.

Dusk was falling and rain descending as Price dropped his last man overboard into the bushes. But the spirit that burned in them all burned white-hot. There alone in the dark each had his bit to do for the honour of the Force ; nothing should stop his doing it to the very limit of human power—and then, perhaps, God helping him, just a little bit more.

Practically the whole belt from end to end is woodland, and practically all brush-covered bog. Corporal Snodgrass, for example, working back from Pleasantville Terrace at the far end of the chart, splashed into a deep swamp. There he stayed, wallowing, till the end of the job. All night long he wallowed, looking for possible trails, using his flashlight but rarely and then with the greatest caution, working backwards and forwards from the comparatively solid strip along the railway track through soft morass toward a rim of higher ground covered with stunted pine. Some two miles back from the track he found wandered the nearest highway—scarcely more than a path winding through pine scrub.

Twice during that night Snodgrass sat down. Then, with what haste he might, he floundered up again, for the thick yellow water rose to his waist and vicious mosquitoes covered him.

The other eleven similarly slopped and slapped their way through the night—after the first ten minutes soaked to the skin with rain and clay-choked bog water. Mosquitoes, likewise, ate them alive.

As dawn broke the scouts, finishing their work, took careful cover in the brushwood,

"'Wha' kinda dog you got there?' pursued the loafer. 'Don' seem's if I'd ever see jes' that kinda dog before.'"

to avoid observation from passing trains. In their minds by now was stored every detail of the ground, every peculiarity of trail, foothold and cover.

At dawn also a further phenomenon occurred. A certain old "local" that potters about between Camden and Atlantic City took to doddering worse than ever. Having always stopped at unimagined stations, it now began stopping at mere crossroads—at nowhere at all.

"What in the world *is* the matter?" the few passengers asked.

"Search *me!*" sighed the conductor, too

humble to resent what any man might say. "Them last two was flag stations. We gotta stop there if anyone asks us. But nobody ever asked before!"

"Did you notice the couple o' young fellers just got off?" put in another eagerly. "Perhaps they're Federal men, huntin' for stills?"

"Federal fiddlesticks!" scoffed a third. "An' yet an' all, they might be huntin' all right—like the rest of us. Good luck to 'em, if they be!"

Price, sitting back in the midst of them, joined cheerfully in the laughter.

Every stop on the time-table did that devoted old "local" make. But only at its obscurest stations and at crossroads in the woods did Price's ninety-two men, by twos and threes and fives, drop off.

And as each detachment alighted, its commander, promptly in contact with his waiting scout, disposed his men in their right concealment, while the captains of the three troops represented, each on the spot, handled each his own men, after the Force's established principle.

READY TO STRIKE.

Thus, by half-past nine on the morning of August 2nd, a hundred and four officers and men of the Pennsylvania State Police Force were mobilized *en masse* on the *cause célèbre* of the hour. And not a syllable of leakage occurred; not a soul outside the Force, save two alone, were a whit the wiser.

So passed a long morning, while the hundred and four—breathing in red-hot mosquitoes, breathing out dumb wrath—soaked and bled and waited, hidden from mortal view in that slippery, slimy, bottomless swamp.

Murmured a young trooper to his Sergeant, "Suppose, now, 'The Crank' doesn't come?"

"Are you raving? A hundred and more of *Us* here to meet him, and *him NOT come!*" . . . But words failed the senior to convey his scorn.

So passed noon, passed one o'clock. Then came two o'clock and nine minutes after.

Two-nine! In Camden Station a plain little train slid over the track—just an ordinary, humble little no-account train made up of an engine, one dingy "combination," and three old baggage cars.

An engineer and his fireman constituted the crew.

"Kinda dull-lookin' proposition that, ain't it?" observed a station loafer to a shabby young man who sat on a baggage truck nursing a dog between his knees.

"You've said it," replied the other.

"Wha' kinda dog you got there?" pursued the loafer. "Don' seem's if I'd ever see jes' that kinda dog before."

"What, this?"—the young man shifted the straw between his teeth—"Why, this here's what you call a red rabbit hound."

Then he hauled himself indolently together, and, with his dog, boarded the object of his own contempt—twelfth and last of its passengers.

Out of Camden Station lurched the dingy train, and if the station loafer could have followed it a bit farther down the track his eyes might have opened wider.

For suddenly, as though new life had struck it, the little old train began to move. In a moment or two it had reached the speed of an express, and by the time it passed the farther boundary of that road-section, known to a certain interested few as "Zone One," it was skimming along like a hawk.

For reasons more conclusive than idleness, however, the loafer could not have watched that train far. Its bunker was filled with "green" coal; its fireman was stoking "green" coal. And its engineer, moreover, had seen fit, as he pulled out of Camden, to close up his draught, with the result that the dingy little train almost at once disappeared behind a smoke-screen of its own making.

Yet, from the beginning of Zone One, eyes watched her as she flew past—sharp eyes peering through good cover. And when her windows showed blank to the end, figures still hidden in the brush sprang backward and away, speeding east, as the train sped, behind cover.

On the train itself rode the Nerve-Trigger—cocked!

SUSPENSE.

Adams sat in the cab—on his lips that queer, still smile, in his eyes that smouldering flare that comes with the final show-down. Gearhart, breathing hard, or scarcely breathing, yet outwardly the image of flawless composure, leaned forward in his seat in the combination coach, from time to time methodically handling a package of pasteboards; most methodically slipping a card to the back of the pack as the train flew on. Two Federal post-office inspectors, brought for a purpose, occupied a seat at the rear of the coach.

Six stolid-looking young men sat between—the six best runners, developed by six weeks of stiff training out of the whole picked body in the Pennsylvania State Police Training School.

And, eleventh and last, Corporal John Russell, of "A" Troop, with his "red rabbit hound," otherwise the bloodhound "Commissioner," pride of the Troop, shivering between his knees.

Commissioner, the sole member of the Force who has not entirely grasped the art and requirements of camouflage, eased from one fore-quarter to the other, shuffling his

big paws like a dancer, crooning to himself a small high song of prophecy, while he gazed into Russell's understanding eyes for the very thing he found there.

Zones 9—10—11.

No flag. No flag.

Just the same smooth scene that two of the company knew now so well. Each rod of it they could have mapped from memory.

Zone 12—the rhythm of the wheels—the rack of the train—the green flow past the windows.

Zone 13—Ellwood Station.

Adams, in the engine-cab, leaned forward a little, while that queer, still smile cut just a trifle deeper and its light flared up in his eyes.

From Ellwood Station, for some four and a half miles, a strip of woods parallels the track, leaving between a cleared fire trail perhaps two hundred and fifty feet deep. The wood is choked with underbrush, behind whose fringe begins the swamp.

Zone 13—flowing past. Adams, in the cab, motionless, brooding, watching, the spirit incarnate of the hunt. Gearhart, in the coach, with a thought in his head for all mothers, a thought for a little life to win, inwardly vowing his all for victory, outwardly silken calm. Behind Gearhart the Six, close-nerved to the cracking point. Pressing hard against Russell's knees, Commissioner, raising ever high and higher his small, fine hymn of prophecy and war. Zone 13, green with sedges, flowing, flowing, flowing past.

Suddenly Adams drew back a bit. Ahead, on the right, two trees, advance-posts of the wood, were aligned obliquely to the track. Between those trees—yes!—there was stretched a sheet—in very truth a White Flag!

On flew the little train, racketing, rocketing, champing furiously at her green-coal fodder, filling the air with ink-black smoke.

So she rushed on until, at Adam's "Now!" she suddenly began to slack down.

About a mile and a half from the flag it was. And while yet she was moving fast, off leaped Adams, followed in a flash by the ten, the while that thick smoke-screen, hugging close and heavy, prevented any observer from behind from discovering that the train had slowed at all, or detecting the figures springing from her side.

In an instant Adams and Gearhart, each taking a trail, disappeared.

The six runners spread out on either side of the track, the rebound of each man's leap lifting him into his first stride. A mile in five minutes was their practice pace, five minutes to a mile of woods and underbrush—terrible running. That left them now two minutes' margin to get back to the flag before the 2.10 express passed.

For this were they trained and chosen. And this, calculated to a dot, was their allotted part—just to close up the net against any chance of the quarry taking to the open—against any last surprise that Fate might spring.

"When you get there, boys," Gearhart had impressed upon the runners, "keep away from the flag. Leave the dog a clean scent."

"COMMISSIONER" DOES HIS WORK.

Commissioner, boring between human legs, had sprung from the train third in the party. His song silenced now, his whole mind and life and thought drove to the work he had to do.

Corporal Russell, his partner, held him on a leash. Over the open spaces he towed that corporal, who is big-limbed and wiry, by flying jumps.

When they came to cross the deep marsh-patches, however, it was the Corporal's turn to lend a hand. For Commissioner sank deep in the ooze between tussock and tussock, and it took all Russell's strength to give him purchase from jump to scramble. Not once, however, did his zeal flicker. And he, the gentle peace-lover, whose daily hope and joy is to play pony for babies to ride, reached now the full height of soldier comradeship.

As, fighting for footholds, he rose from one complete disappearance under the thick bog-water, blood spurted from his leg. He had severed a big vein on the harsh, knife-edged grass. From that moment the blood pumped out in rhythmic jets as he ran.

Russell saw it with horror, but for neither of the pair was there any stopping now.

The 2.10 express thundered by within fifty yards, but the dog never gave it a glance. Plunging ahead in advance of the man, not once did he mistake the way.

So they sighted the flag, these two, and sped toward it—the leader all wounded and bleeding, yet pulling like a horse. Well behind the flag stood a knot of men. But Russell had his orders. Never stopping to look a second time at the group, he put his comrade straight to the flag, where it hung between its two scrub-pines—let him catch the scent of it. And so, off—the dog this time pulling for good and all, in very truth.

Not a sound came from Commissioner now, nor had, since he plunged from the train. He ran with his nose to the ground, swiftly, in long strides. From the flag he went to a pile of railway ties; then some fifty yards forward toward the railway track. Then up the embankment to the roadbed. Thence, sharply wheeling, he hurried down to a spot in the swamp. Finally, with a rush at right angles, he went straight to the group of men, now breathlessly watching the performance of their comrade in this, his hour.

Like a shell from a ·75 Commissioner clove

the group to its core. Without a shadow of wavering he singled out one man who stood in the midst. Rising, he planted his two fore-paws on that man's breast, flung back his beautiful head, and for the first time spoke—a deep, bell-throated, mournful, solemn bay. Proclaiming now, for all to hear, the Truth that his morning hymn had prophesied.

All this happened within five minutes after the capture.

Meanwhile the men from the two ends of Zone 13, those from Zone 12 on the one hand and those from Zone 14 on the other, as well as the six special runners, had come swooping down. So, when Adams and Gearhart ran in, twelve minutes after the event—each having been delayed by false scents on the way—the scene stood complete.

Lieutenant Snyder, from one end of Zone 13, Sergeant Parker, from the other, Privates Haggerty and Gecelosky, all "C" Troop men, now made their outline reports.

WHAT THE WATCHERS SAW.

About half-past one o'clock, they said, a man carrying a bundle under his arm and walking very jauntily had come strolling down the track from Egg Harbour. Reaching a pile of ties by the roadbed (in the middle of Zone 13, had he but guessed), he sat down and lit a cigarette.

The cigarette smoked out, this leisurely wayfarer opened his parcel and took out a white sheet. Then he drew from his pocket a ball of cord, tied a length to each of two corners of the sheet, and proceeded to attach the loose ends to two pine-trees, standing near the pile of ties. He fastened the cords; then he spread the sheet between the trees, surveyed it critically for a moment, lighted a fresh cigarette, looked at his watch, and lay down out of sight behind a clump of brush.

During all of which proceedings Private Haggerty, of the Pennsylvania State Police Force, could have laid hand upon him by taking a few long steps.

But orders were: "Let him pick up the package to be thrown from the express."

The moment for the passing of the express arrived. An approaching engine boomed loud. Out of the clump of brush rose a head—gazed, ducked, and reappeared to gaze again, as the little green-coal train flew by without a sign.

The man in the bush arose, took out a time-table, and studied it. Then he looked at his watch again and up and down the track. Moving back to the pile of ties, he sat down and smoked another cigarette. More and more obvious became the nervousness that grew upon him.

"And yet"—his thought stood clear enough to read—"time-tables are sometimes changed."

Nevertheless his uneasiness waxed fast. Presently he sprang up, so clearly with the intention of leaving that Haggerty almost launched himself in a jump.

utterly alone and unobserved, walked slowly up the embankment to the track, and along the roadbed to the point where lay the parcel that had fallen from the express.

Why did he stand so long idly looking at it? Why did he not pick up the thing he had so clearly come to get?

"He landed splash into the arms of Private Gecelosky!"

But at that very instant came the rumble and roar of the 2.10 itself—the true Atlantic City Flyer. Hastily the watcher reconcealed himself. And this time, from one of the coach windows, an arm was thrust forth just as it passed the wayside flag—an arm with a parcel in its hand, the hand tossing the parcel off.

The watcher, half-crouched in the brush, watched as that train reeled out of sight. Then he jumped out, swept the scene about him with his eyes and, finding himself

As though puzzled in his own mind, he stood hesitating, with bowed head. At last he turned, looked up the road, looked down the road, uttered one wild exclamation, broke for the bush—and landed splash into the arms of Private Gecelosky!

Had he jumped the other way, Sergeant Parker would have embraced him. Had he tried the track itself, up or down, the men whose approach he had seen would have gathered him in. On the other side of the embankment the way stood as squarely barred.

And exactly the same sort of thing would have occurred had he chosen for his operation

any other practicable spot in the whole fifty-odd miles. Not the ghost of a chance had he anywhere. Not one.

But now that it was over the man himself was incredible. His calm—his mild, cool, passionless calm. His ripple of untroubled lies.

"I did not hang up the flag. I know nothing about it," he had asserted, till Commissioner's tragic pæan, more than the word of three true men, proved him a liar.

Then, "Yes; I hung up the flag," he admitted. "A man asked me to do it for him. I don't know what for."

"The rest of this can wait till we cross the State line," said Adams to Gearhart. Accompanied by one trooper only, they steered the captive into the bush.

Back on the highway—the outbound trail that wanders through the scrub—they found what they looked for, one William Coulter, at the wheel of a shiny, brand-new Packard car.

Beside Mr. Coulter sat Captain Price. And Price, as the car fled lunging and bouncing along the trail, told a story of an odd happening down the track.

Certain inhabitants of Egg Harbour, he narrated, had remarked the green-coal train's behaviour, in suddenly slowing where slowing is not done, had beheld men spring from her sides like the Greeks from the Horse of Troy, and thereupon had gone mad.

"Train robbers! Brigands! Revolutionists! Here in our city to attack us!" they gasped.

And if the conduct of the invaders in rushing with all speed in the opposite direction failed to quite bear out that view, surely much could be forgiven the unsophisticated inhabitants of peaceful Egg Harbour.

They hurried to their Mayor, they roused their Town Marshal—and by the time three Zone 14 men, racing like greyhounds, reached the place and would have crossed it, Egg Harbour's manhood barred the way in outraged majesty.

Now, Zone 14's party did look odd, from Egg Harbour's point of view. Zone 14 had already lost a good share of its raiment, partly through discarding for speed, partly by the detaining clutch of briar and bough as it tore through the bush. Zone 14 revealed much surface of ripped and bleeding flesh, much absence of conventional garments. But its full cartridge belts and its big, black automatics showed up very prominently.

And, conversely, from Zone 14's point of view, Egg Harbour had surely no physical power to stop it for the space of one little breath.

But Zone 14 must move wisely. It was out of its sovereign territory—out of Pennsylvania—and the honour of the Force lay in its hands. Yet—would the kind gods, therefore, permit Egg Harbour, New Jersey, to tear out Zone 14's heart?

"They had twelve bloodhounds, those bandits that jumped from the train. There were forty men! It's an insurrection!" panted one loyal citizen. "How much ammunition have we got? Who's got guns?"

Said the Town Marshal to Zone 14—"I arrest you in the name of the law."

And just at that moment, like a direct answer to prayer, appeared the nose of a brand-new Packard car, with four familiar eyes just above it.

"What's this?" asked Price, in the quiet little voice that he keeps for specially rapid business.

The Town Marshal, learning that his questioner embodied the authority of the neighbouring Commonwealth, explained.

"Happily, I can reassure you," returned Price, "for I am in on this myself with the Federal officers."

"Yes," echoed a stoutish, shortish, hatless, breathless man, now pushing through the crowd. "I am a United States Postal Inspector. I came on that train, and would be with those fellows you saw right now, if I was built to run like they can. Heaven knows I tried, but I could *not* make it! Let these men go, *quick!* They're needed beyond. This is a United States case and doesn't concern you." And he showed good proof of his own identity.

Adams and Gearhart laughed a bit when they heard the tale, for it depicted exactly a situation that they had both foreseen and forestalled when they took the two postal men into their company. In crossing into New Jersey to work they were invading a foreign State. Circumstances, nevertheless, forbade their risking publicity by procuring formal powers. An actual violation of the Federal postal laws had been committed, however, when "The Crank" burdened the mails with threatening letters, and no local authority could challenge the Federal Government's punitive hand.

Now as the Packard lunged ahead the three officers of the State of Pennsylvania looked well at their prisoner.

THE PRISONER.

As their practised glance measured him he showed about thirty-six years, height a little over the medium, build sinewy. His swarthy skin matched dark Italian eyes and hair. Cheekbones high and broad, nose rather finely cut, long and aquiline. A sharp dark, glittering eye, a broad intelligent forehead, a hard mouth, set in lines of cruelty.

"Where," Adams asked him, "is the Coughlins' baby?"

The prisoner returned his look with one of patience—of unmoved endurance.

"Coughlins'?" he echoed. "I don't understand, I don't know about any baby."

"Other people know about the Coughlin baby," said Gearhart grimly. "Someone kidnapped him, you see. People around here don't like baby-stealers. They may think you stole Baby Coughlin. Look at that bunch of men over yonder. It wouldn't be wonderful if they had come out to lynch you."

The prisoner, half-springing to his feet, peered ahead. Surely enough, a group of men stood in the road, signalling the car to stop.

With a smothered scream he flung himself on the floor. Grovelled, patting his captors' knees with tremulous, clutching, fluttering hands. Wept, praying, kissing their boots.

"Don't let them take me," he wailed, "don't let them get me!"

"Then where is the Coughlins' child?" asked Adams, seizing his chance.

Two seconds' pause—then the flutter and the tumult ceased, as a still voice answered:—

"What do I know of any child?"

Whispered Adams to Gearhart: "A physical coward with the brain of a fox."

In the flag-hanger's pockets, when they snared him there in the swamp, they had found some interesting objects—a ball of twine, like that with which the sheet was fastened, a visiting card bearing the words: "August Pascal, New Gretna, N.J.," and the deed of a property embracing a house and some four acres of land, lying in New Gretna, New Jersey, lately conveyed, for the sum of $1,700, to one, August Pascal.

It was that deed and that visiting card which now directed the leaps and lurches of Mr. William Coulter's high-powered car through the Jersey marshes to New Gretna, a tiny village six miles from Tuckerton, on the main travel-route between New York and Atlantic City. There they hurried to a decent class frame house—August Pascal's deeded demesne.

Now of all the eager men who that day beset the path of the flag-hanger not one but was bitterly disappointed that the man came alone to his work—that he had not brought the baby. Yet, with the discovery of his probable abode, hope rose keen again. In his home, surely, would be the child!

THE EMPTY HOUSE.

But the New Gretna house, whose ownership the prisoner admitted, contained no human inhabitant when the officers of the State reached it—displayed, indeed, no trace of recent occupancy by more than one person. One room only had been used. On one side of its tumbled bed stood a rifle, by the other a shotgun, both loaded. A lonely bulldog was locked within, a collie mourned in the barn. In the bureau lay several articles of jewellery—a wrist-watch, a signet ring, and other relatively costly objects. In a drawer were filed certain accounts of money expended. In a cupboard hung certain old coats.

Throughout the search the prisoner remained an immobile spectator, betraying neither interest nor uneasiness. And steadfastly, wearily, patiently, he continued to deny any knowledge of what it might all be about.

At last, having for the moment finished the job, they turned about and sped for Trenton as straight as roads would take them, and so across the Delaware to their own Pennsylvania soil.

At three o'clock that morning, August 3rd, August Pascal, suspected of kidnapping Blakeley Coughlin, lay under guard of Pennsylvania State officers in the Norristown hot-box.

August Pascal, suspect, had been captured, but there was no evidence yet on which to convict him. Little Blakeley Coughlin's fate was still an enigma every whit as dark as before.

Thus began the second stage in the desperate game of wit against wit, with a mother's heart and a baby's life-blood for the sweepstake.

The Coughlins, looking the prisoner over, could associate nothing with him—had never, knowingly, seen him before. So his captors took him to the State Police Headquarters at Harrisburg, to continue his examination. No cross-questioning worried him, however. Coolly and quietly he continued to disclaim all knowledge of the matter.

Meanwhile a fine piece of co-operation went forward between the City Police of Philadelphia—who, under Captain Souder, worked night and day, full-manned, running down every city clue with splendid vigour—and the State Police, who handled all that concerned the rural parts. And so at last one scrap of news came in—one scrap of dynamic potency.

A SCRAP OF EVIDENCE.

"August Pascal," the City Force discovered, had lately occupied one room in a house on Seventh Street, Philadelphia. One of the City Force's detectives, Mr. Gibson, doing an excellent piece of work, now discovered in the stove in that room a partly-burned envelope upon which was written several times over, as by someone practising, the name and address of George H. Coughlin. The paper, the ink, the handwriting exactly matched those appearing in the blackmailing letters of "The Crank."

Once in possession of that envelope Adams summoned the prisoner into his presence.

"Did you write letters to Mr. Coughlin demanding money for his baby's life?"

Pascal wearily murmured: "No."

"I will show you a picture: In your room on Seventh Street," pursued the interrogator, for the first time exhibiting his knowledge of

"He thrust the charred scrap of evidence before his prisoner's gaze."

that room, "you sat at your table writing. You spoiled an envelope, practising upon it. You put the envelope in the stove. There was no fire, so you set a match to it and closed the stove door expecting it to burn up.

"But"—and here Adams, leaning forward, rose to his full six feet, while his eyes glowed black and terrible—"*you* reckoned only with man. God intervened and put that fire out! Look!"

And he thrust the charred scrap of evidence before his prisoner's gaze.

Pascal stared like a creature turned to stone. A moment he gasped—seemed about to faint. For a moment again, he sat silent; then he raised his head, calm as before.

"Well, since you know—yes, I *did* write those letters. But not for myself. It was the morning after the baby was stolen. A man named Joe came to my room and asked me to write for him.

"'August, I want you to write some letters,' he said.

"But he had to tell me just what to write, because I cannot lie. He asked for the ransom money. I never saw the child. Afterward I read things about it in the paper. But all I ever did was to write as Joe told me. I know nothing at all—not even Joe's other name."

Nor could the utmost endeavours take him farther.

At the end of a week, therefore, a week in which a mass of investigation of barren leads went forward to its natural but necessary finish, back to Norristown went the prisoner of the State, committed to the County Jail.

Do not miss the dramatic conclusion of this most remarkable story.

A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA

Very few people know just where Albania is; still fewer know anything about it. The interior is a maze of mountains, inhabited by wild tribes who have preserved their independence and their own peculiar manners and customs for thousands of years.

by Rose Wilder Lane

In these fascinating articles Mrs. Lane describes her adventures among the remote northern mountains—a picturesque country where the tribal blood-feud still flourishes and where the rare Western visitor finds himself back in the Middle Ages.

Illustrated by R. CATON WOODVILLE, and from Photographs by ANNETTE MARQUIS.

III.

I LOOKED at my wrist-watch, whose radium dial shone in the darkness. Half-past five. The man who was making coffee smiled at me. "Long may you live!" said he warmly, offering me the tiny cup with one hand, the other on his heart. As in a nightmare I struggled to reach it, and made my stiff lips reply: "And to you, long life!"

Perolli sat up quickly, wide awake as an aroused animal. "Good morning!" said he happily. "Time to get up!"

Rain was still sluicing down from a grey sky; every rock in the interminable ranges of mountain peaks seemed to be the source of a foaming stream. Betsy, Alex and I, with our toilet cases in our hands, made our way along the side of a cliff to a waterfall, knelt on the dripping rocks beside it, and washed and brushed our teeth. The woman who accompanied us watched us with interest, and exclaimed when we showed her the tooth-paste tubes, the tooth-brushes in their cases, the cakes of soap, the jars of cold-cream, the strange machine-made Turkish towelling, and the white combs. Even to ourselves they seemed exotic luxuries in this wild country.

"And at that," I said enviously, "I wish I had her complexion!" The woman stood by the waterfall, as graceful as a cat, strong-limbed, clear-eyed, fine-skinned, and her bare feet in the cold water were joys to the eye, slim, beautifully formed, arched, with almond nails and a rose-marble colour. True, her face and hands were grimy with wood-smoke, and ours, when we looked at each other, set us off into exhausting laughter.

"We do this every morning," Betsy explained in Albanian. "It is American custom." The woman looked as though she thought it rather foolish. Still, if it were the custom——

"Also," said Betsy, "every morning we wash the children and the babies, all over, from head to foot."

"Yes?" said the woman, indifferently. "Here babies stay in their cradles. Children go into the water when they are old enough to swim. Then only in the summer, when it is not cold."

Betsy gave it up. We came back from the waterfall, on a path that was like a terrace of Heaven overlooking all the world of mountains and valleys and swirling clouds. We were already wet to the skin with rain, but that did not matter, for we had before us the day's walking in it, and our indifference to wet clothes and feet was already quite Albanian. And the morning, and the mountain air, and the endless ranges of mountains seemed to us glorious. We thought that it would be fun to herd goats among these peaks and to live for ever in a stone house with a fire on the floor, and a pan of corn bread baking in the coals. No dusting, for there was no furniture; no making of beds, for there were no beds; no curtains to keep fresh, for there were no windows; no trouble with clothes, for centuries saw no change in fashions; no work except hand-weaving and embroidery and the washing of linen in a brook. No haste, no worry, no struggle to invent new needs that one must struggle to satisfy. All that simplicity and leisure our ancestors traded for a rug on the floor, a trinket-covered dressing-table, for knives and forks and kitchen ranges, fountain pens and stiff

white collars, and fashion books. It seemed to us then a bargain in which we had been cheated.

That morning we set out again—after a cup of Turkish coffee each—to walk another twenty miles over the Albanian mountains, through the Wood of the Ora, the tribal lands of Plani, and over the Chafa Bosheit to the next village.

Four men of Marke Gjonni's household went with us to carry the packs, so we left the stone house peaceful on the cliff below our upward climbing path, not disturbing it with any parting volley when we paused for our last glimpse of it. A faint haze of blue smoke hung over it, seeping through the slates of the roof; there was no other sign of life about it, and only the smoke distinguished it from the natural rocks. Beside us the stream roared and glittered in the sunlight as it fell into the depths; following with our gaze its narrowing ribbon of silver and searching for the blue smoke-haze, we found the house, and I would have had Cheremi fling down to it the keen high call of farewell, ended by six times three shots, that we had sent back to the Bishop.

But no; there were only women left in the house, and how could I be so crude as to imagine that one greeted women with rifle-shots?

We went on for a time over sunshiny uplands, and I remember that day as a succession of sun and shower, of small grassy plateaus, and quick dips down cliff-sides, and struggles up again, beside and through waterfalls that drenched the rocks with spray for yards around. Our muscles were now accustomed to the exercise; they complained hardly at all, and with occasional pauses for rest beneath the wooden crosses set at long intervals along the trail we went gaily, accompanied by the shrill songs of the men.

Presently we saw them stopping on the trail ahead, stopping with quick hands on their rifles, and remembering in a strange kind of panic that no one could be killed in the presence of a woman, I flung myself, gasping, up the slope, crying with my last half-breath, "Long may you live!" to two strange men who appeared before us.

Then I collapsed panting on a grassy knoll and dimly through my dizzy eyes I saw that the men, relaxing gladly, were sitting down around me and taking out their silver tobacco boxes.

"A Shoshi man," explained Perolli, "with one of Pultit. I don't just get it; something to do with the blood-feud. Let me listen."

We sat on the grassy knoll, which seemed to be the edge of the world, so far below it the valleys lay, and listened while the men of the tribes that were "in blood" talked easily together of unimportant matters and offered each other cigarettes.

The Shoshi man had taken off his turban and wore on his handsome head only the tiny round white cap, hardly larger than the curved palm of a hand, that covered his scalp-lock. Around its edges the hair was shaved clean to the skull, and with his weather-browned face and scarlet sash bristling with knives he looked altogether a savage.

He was an exile from his own people, we learned. A man of the tribe had killed this man's brother in a quarrel over irrigation water; the chief men of the tribe had called a council and deplored the murder, condemning the murderer to pay ten thousand kronen to the murdered man's family. This had been done, but the brother rebelled against the decision. Blood could be paid for only in blood, he declared; such was the ancient Law of Lek, and who were the men of these young centuries that they should set aside that law? Therefore he had shot and killed the man who had killed his brother, and then, sending his wife to the chiefs to return the ten thousand kronen, he had fled to the house of a friend in Pultit.

Now it is the law that when the chiefs of a tribe take council together and arrive at a decision, they must consult all the members of the tribe involved in that decision; when they all agree to it, it must be carried out. The honour of the chiefs is involved. If any party to the agreement breaks it, then all the chiefs, together and separately, with all masculine members of their families, must not rest until they kill that man and clear their honour. So seven chiefs of Shoshi, with all their sons and brothers, were hunting this Shoshi man.

"As it should be," said one of our men, judicially, and quoted their proverb, "A goat is tied by the horns, a man by his word."

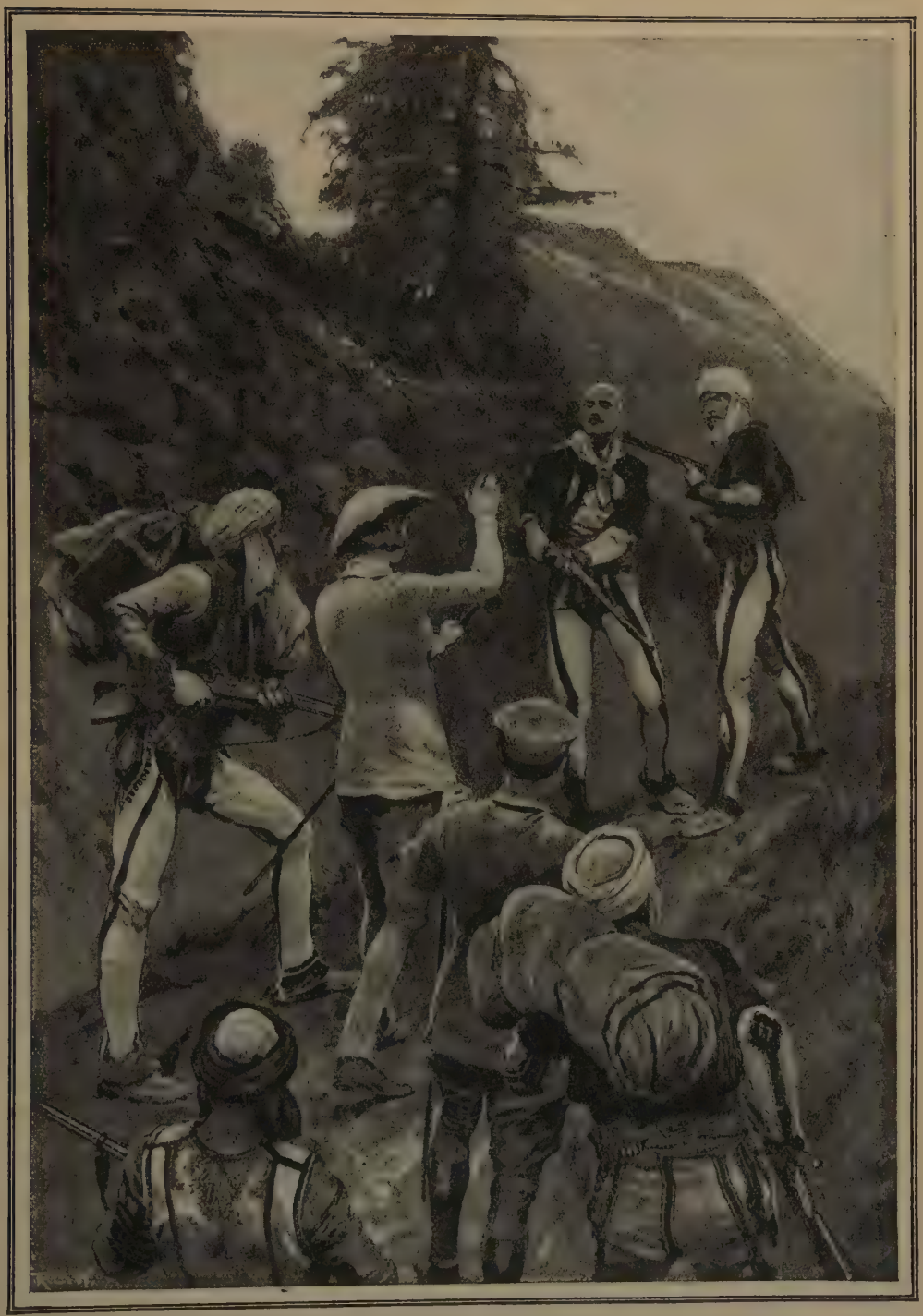
"That may be," said the Shoshi man, retorting with another. "But 'where the tooth aches, the tongue will go.' This matter was a sore tooth to me, and I had no sleep until I killed that man who killed my brother. As to the money, I have returned it. Money will not buy my brother's blood."

The men fell silent, smoking. "But why hasn't he been killed before now?" I demanded of Perolli, when their words had been translated to me.

"He is travelling with his friend, the man of Pultit," said Perolli. "He is under that man's protection. If the chiefs of Shoshi kill him, they will be in blood with the tribe of Pultit, whose hospitality they will have violated. Shoshi is already in blood with Shala, and——"

I exclaimed aloud. The endless complexities of the laws of these supposedly lawless people were too much for me. It was almost as bewildering as our own courts.

"Meantime," said Perolli, "the chiefs have torn down this man's house. That looks as though they will reach some peaceful settlement."



"Remembering that no one could be killed in the presence of a woman, I flung myself, gasping, up the slope."

"Why?" I asked.

"If they didn't mean to stop until they killed him, they would not have destroyed his house," explained Perolli. "I think they will hold another council and simply banish him from the tribe and from the mountains."

"But if he does not go?"

"Oh then, of course, they would really have to kill him. And of course they must kill him now, if they meet him. But as long as the man of Pultit is with him, they will try not to meet him."

"So," said I, "wherever there are laws there are ways of getting around them. And I suppose these men of ours would have to be killing him now, if I were not here?"

"Certainly," said Perolli, "our Shala men would have to, because Shala is in blood with Shoshi, and this is a Shoshi man."

"Even when his own chiefs are hunting him? Even if he were banished from the tribe?"

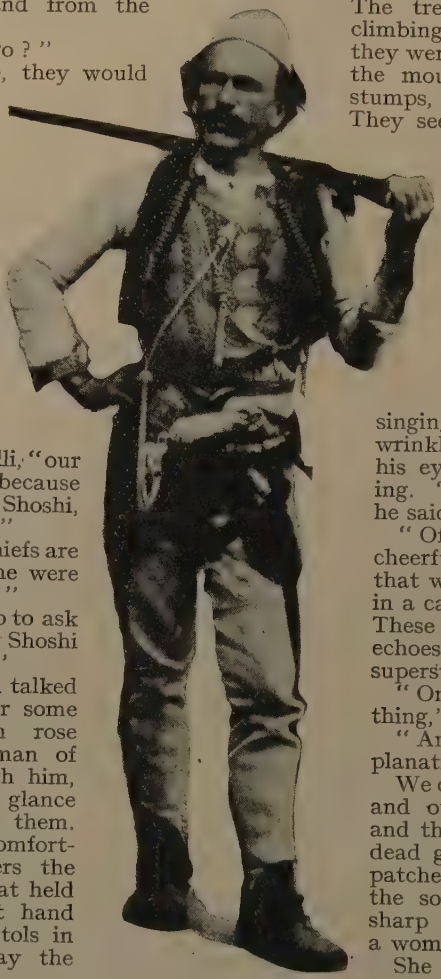
"Well, one doesn't stop to ask that. He wears the Shoshi braiding on his trousers."

After we had rested and talked and smoked together for some time, the Shoshi man rose leisurely to go. The man of Pultit rose instantly with him, and each cast a searching glance over the valley before them. Then they hitched more comfortably over their shoulders the woven woollen straps that held their rifles, ran an alert hand over the knives and pistols in their sashes, threw away the butts of their cigarettes.

"Long life to you," they said politely.

"And to you, long life," we responded. "Go on a smooth trail."

In a moment the last glimpse of their heads had disappeared as they made their way down the steep path. The forest was very still, the sunlight on the wet rocks very golden, and for a hundred miles the mountains stretched into the distance. It was all very peaceful and beautiful, and we sang as we took the trail again, but for a long time, whenever the sharp bark of a rifle was answered by a hundred cliffs, I wondered. It was nothing, probably—merely someone firing his gun at the sky in sheer exuberance of spirit. It happens all the time, in these mountains.



An Albanian hillman.

It was on this day that we passed the Wood of the Ora, and even though I had not heard the stories of them, I should have felt an uncanny sensation while going through that narrow, dark defile between grey cliffs. The trees stood thickly there, climbing the boulder-strewn slope; they were cut, like all the trees of the mountains, to mere limbless stumps, and they were very old. They seemed to have writhed for centuries under the blows of the shepherds' axes. Beyond them rose rocks, perhaps five hundred feet high, evil-looking cliffs contorted like the trees, and these faced, above our heads, a smooth sheer wall of tilted grey limestone that overhung the trail.

Our men stopped singing, and Cheremi's mirth-wrinkled face became solemn; his eyes were awed and listening. "The Wood of the Ora," he said in a hushed voice.

"Of course," said Alex cheerfully, in an everyday voice that was like a ray of daylight in a cave, "it's simple enough. These cliffs repeat far-away echoes, and that's how the superstition started."

"One can explain everything," said Betsy.

"And then explain the explanations," said I.

We came up out of the Wood, and over the next mountain, and there on a slope, where the dead grass was splotched with patches of rotting snow, and the soft earth trodden by the sharp hoofs of goats, we met a woman herding goats.

She was a tall, dark-eyed woman, handsome, but not beautiful. Her face, as we say, was full of character, and there was independence, even a shade of defiance, in her bearing as she stood watching us approach, her chin up, her eyes cool and steady, one hand grasping a peeled branch as a staff, her ragged skirt strained against her by the wind that blew down from the mountain pass. Her thick dark hair hung forward over her shoulders in two braids, and from each dangled a charm of bright blue beads, defence against any demon she might meet in the mountains.

"Long life to you!" she said.

"And to you, long life!" we replied, and seeing her glance fall covetously on my cigarette—only the swiftest flicker of a glance it was—I offered her one. She

took it, thanked me, lighted it from mine.

"A bold woman," said Perolli.

"Why?"

"In these mountains the women smoke, but not before men; that is a man's privilege, and it is unwomanly to smoke in their presence. Are you a woman?" he asked her in Albanian.

"A woman of Pultit, married in Shala. A widow with two children, demanding justice from my tribe," she said.

I looked about. There was nothing but snow and wet earth to sit on. Well, she must have been standing for hours, watching the goats. I leaned on my staff. "What justice?" said I.

She told us with calm precision, with none of her people's rhetorical flourishes.

She had been married five years; she was twenty-one years old. She had two children, boys. While she was married her husband had built a house. It was a large house; two rooms. She had helped her husband build that house. With her own hands she had laid the slate on the roof. She liked that house. She had lived in it four years. Now her husband had been killed by the Serbs, and she wanted to keep that house. She wanted to live in it, alone, with her two children.

"But it is impossible!" said Perolli. "A large house, with two rooms, for one woman?"

Yes! she said. She wanted that house; it was her house. She was going to have that house. She was not going to stop talking till she got that house.

"By Jove! I like her spirit!" said Betsy. The woman stood looking from one to the other of us, defiant, superb.

"Well, but what's become of the house?" Alex demanded.

Her husband's brother, now head of the family, had taken it. He was living in it with his wife and children and brothers and cousins—seventeen of them in all. The family—which comprised all the village at the foot of the slope on which we stood—had decided that the house should be used for them. She and her children could live with them. But she would not do it. She wanted that house all for herself; she said again that it was her house. Until she got that house nothing would content her or keep her silent. Her sons she had sent to the priest's house in Plani. He had taken them in and promised to educate them for the priesthood. For herself, she remained in this village, clamouring for that house. If she got it before her sons were grown and married she would bring them back to live with her. She might do so, even when they *were* married. That did not matter; what she wanted was the house, her house, all for herself.

"Well," said Perolli, "I pity the chiefs of that village."

A mountain shepherd.

"But where do you suppose she got the idea?"

"Heaven knows! Who can tell what women will think of?" said Perolli.

We left her standing on the cliff edge, still superb and defiant, the cigarette in her hand and the blue beads twinkling at the ends of her braids. A bright scarlet handkerchief was twisted around her head, and her wide belt, thickly studded with silver nails, shone like armour. A picture of revolt, and I thought what a catastrophe she must be in the peaceful village to which—clinging and dropping from boulder to boulder—we were descending.

"Will we see her again?" I asked.

"Oh, she'll probably drop in during the evening. She looks like a woman who would," said Perolli.

The village consisted of perhaps fifteen houses, clustered on flat land at the foot of the cliffs. Beyond it, a creamy blue flood swollen by the rains, the Lumi Shala, ran straight between the mountain ranges. A score of little streams, stone-walled and crossed by tiny stone bridges, ran through the village, and all the land on which it stood was cut into odd-shaped pieces by many stone fences and raised channels of stone for irrigation water.

Wading the streams, walking on the fences, crossing the tiny bridges, we came at last to the house selected for us by the man we had sent ahead, were greeted with shouts and a volley of shots, and ushered into the warm, smoky dusk, where the house-fire glimmered like a red eye.

Although this was only our second night in a native house in the heart of the Albanian mountains, I cannot tell you how natural it seemed to us. It was as though we had always come home from the chill mountain twilight to a dark warm room where a fire smouldered on an earthen floor and the night was shut out by unbroken walls.

We drank the offered cups of sweet thick coffee, the large glasses of *rakejia;* Cheremi washed our feet; the dripping wet goats and sheep were herded in through the open door and fell to munching dried leaves; the women nursed their babies, stooping above the painted gay cradles where the infants lay bound.

The place was slightly different from the house of Marke Gjonni. The end where the goats were eating was shut off from the rest by a lattice-work of woven willow boughs, and high against the wall where we sat by the fire an enclosed platform of the same lattice-work hung like a huge bird's nest. It was reached by the stairway—a slanting log, notched roughly into steps. Above the fire itself was another square of interlaced branches, hung from the ceiling; the smoke rose and curled against it and made long velvety fringes of soot, and all around its edges were wooden pegs on which our coats were hung to dry, and haunches of goat's meat were hung to smoke. From one of the pegs swung a basket of wrought-iron holding slivers of blazing pitch-pine; this was the lamp.

Ten men of the village had come in to see us; several older and more dignified ones, whom we took to be chiefs, and some young ones, and half-a-dozen boys, all moving gracefully as panthers, their white garments ghostly in the gloom, and each swinging his rifle from his shoulder and hanging it on a peg near the door before he settled himself near the fire, where the quivering light flickered over silver chains, bright sashes, and coloured turbans. Their large brown eyes regarded us with serious friendliness; when they turned their heads their profiles were sharp and fine against the darkness, and their hands were slender, firmly moulded, aristocratic.

One of our empty cigarette boxes—the little ten-cigarette, tinfoil-lined ones—I handed to a little boy, perhaps four years old. He took it gravely, thanking me like a man, and retired to look at it. But hardly had he opened the flap when I saw the hand of a chief come over the boy's shoulder and quietly take the box. The boy gave it up with not even a shade of discontent on his face, and it passed slowly from hand to hand, inspected, marvelled at, discussed. The cunningness of the folding, the beautiful design of the printing and picture, the delicacy of the tissue paper, the pliability of the tinfoil, engrossed them all. When they had satisfied their curiosity and admiration, it went back to the boy, who took it with his hand on his heart, bowed, and sat for a long time looking at it.

"Have you ever seen such perfect courtesy?" said I, marvelling. "And from such a baby!"

Perolli looked at me in amazement. "Why, what's strange about it?" he asked.

Undoubtedly we were among the most courteous people in the world, I thought; but the next moment that idea was completely upset, for out of the darkness came the rebel woman who wanted her house.

She came quite calmly into the circle of firelight, her beautiful hands low on her thighs below the wide, silver-shining marriage-belt, the blue beads twinkling at the ends of the long black braids of her hair, her chin up, and a light of battle in her eyes.

"May you live long!" said she to the circle, and "To you, long life!" we responded. But the chiefs looked at her sideways from narrowed eyes and then again at the fire. The children regarded her with wide, attentive eyes, chins on their hands; the sprawling, graceful, handsome youths seemed amused. Beyond the firelight the women of the household went about their tasks; one came in and lowered from her

A picturesque Roman bridge near Thethis.

shoulders a large, kidney-shaped wooden keg of water.

"When am I going to get my house?" demanded the woman. She stood there superb, holding that question like a bone above a mob of starving dogs, and they rose at it.

I have never seen such pandemonium. Three chiefs spoke at once, snarling. In a moment they were on their feet—all the men were on their feet. I expected them to fly at each other's throats, after the words that they hurled at each other like spears. I expected them to strike the woman, so violently did they thrust their faces close to hers, clenching quivering fists on the hilts of the knives in their sashes. She stamped her foot; her lips curled back like a dog's from her fine, gleaming teeth, and she stood her ground, flashing back at them words that seemed poisoned by the venom in her eyes. "My house!" she repeated, "I want my house!"

Then suddenly they were all quiet. They sat down; they rolled cigarettes; the coffee-maker picked up his flung-away pot and went on making coffee. Only the eyes of the chiefs were still cold and bitter, and the woman, though silent, was not at all defeated. There was a pause.

"Ask the chief what she wants," said I to Perolli.

"Who can say what the avalanche desires?" replied the chief contemptuously. "She would break our village into pieces. She has no respect for wisdom or custom. She says that a house is her house; she is a widow with two sons and she demands the house in which she lived with her husband. She wishes to take a house from the tribe and keep it for herself. Have the mountains seen such a thing since a hundred years before the Turks came? She is bewitched!"

"I helped to build that house," persisted the woman. "With my own hands I laid the roof upon it. It is my house. I will not give up my house."

Betsy and I hugged each other in silent convulsions of delight. My pen spilled ink on my excited hands as I tried to capture their words in shorthand.

"What are they going to do about it?"

The question was not too tactful, nor too happily received, but they answered it. "They have already called a council of the whole village four times," said Perolli. "They will do nothing about it. Houses

belong to the tribe. It is a large house, and the people have decided that her dead husband's brother shall have it for his household. She has been offered a place in it. If she does not want that, she can live wherever she likes in the tribe. No one will refuse shelter or food to her and her children. She has friends with whom she can live, since she quarrels with her husband's brother. All this is absurd, and they will not call another council to satisfy a foolish woman."

"I want my house," said the woman, and so saying she went out, leaving a silence behind her.

At eleven o'clock, after some singing; Cheremi broke reluctantly from the merry group and, approaching us stealthily, whispered a request to be permitted to go home for the night. His house lay only four hours away—perhaps forty miles by our measurements; he had not seen his family for two years, and he wished to visit them. He would be back before dawn, he said. We gave him permission, and one of the villagers went with him, to guard him from the village dogs.

Then we learned that when darkness came the dogs were let loose, and after their loosening only the boldest ventured outside stone walls. The long wolf-howl that rose and quavered and sank and rose again along the trail that Cheremi followed made the dangers of the night vocal for us. We had seen the dogs, tied by the houses, curled into sullen grey-white balls. They are wolves, the original dogs, torn from the forests and made half-tamed savage companions of these primitive men. Here in the Albanian mountains the long process of moulding life, by which men have created the breeds of dogs we know, is still in its beginning.

For us, safe in the shelter of solid walls, the night wore away as the previous one had done. Talk and music and the desperate struggle with weariness; the leisurely dinner in the small hours of the morning, the brief lapse into unconsciousness, lying on the floor which we shared with twenty others—our host and his wife and their smallest child had ascended the notched log to the nest of woven branches that hung above us on the wall—and the awakening at dawn to the smell of new-made coffee.

"Perolli," said Betsy desperately, "I simply can't walk another twenty miles on one little cup of coffee. Isn't there something left over from dinner? Can't I have just one little bite of cornbread? Oh, Perolli, *please!*"

"If we stay for that, it means we'll never start," said I. "Slowly, slowly, little by little, breakfast will be ready at six this afternoon."

"But I'm starving!" she wailed.

To Alex and me the cool, sweet morning outside the smoke-filled dark house called more irresistibly than any thought of food. So at six o'clock, accompanied by the gay Cheremi, who had just returned, she and I set out on the twenty-mile walk to Thethis, leaving Perolli explaining that Betsy was of a different American tribe, a tribe whose custom was to eat in the mornings.

It was not raining; the sky was just like one enormous water-spout. When we came out of the smoky, reeking darkness of the cave-like house it was like plunging into a water-fall. We gasped with the shock of it, and in an instant there was not a dry inch of skin on our bodies. But we had been some days in these mountains, walking in the rain, and after the first chill impact our blood rebounded; we were warm, and clutching streaming staffs in dripping hands Alex and I followed Cheremi gaily enough.

We went first down the bed of a small stream that ran steeply from the mountains above to the Lumi Shala below. The water was about a foot deep, but as soon as we got used to the force of the current we got along very well. Whenever we came to a sheer drop of three or four feet, Cheremi braced himself and swung us lightly down. We progressed in this manner for perhaps a third of a mile, tingling with the exertion. Then we came out on the narrow gravelly banks of the Lumi Shala, and were joined by a strange Albanian, nude to the waist, who was out for a morning stroll.

The proper thing was to offer him cigarettes, but how could one do it in that pouring rain? However, the difficulty soon solved itself, for we found a boulder as large as a house, with a natural corridor running through it, and though its walls dripped and our feet sank to the ankles in little wells, we managed, in its shelter, to produce and light our damp cigarettes.

The little cave was filled with a curious greenish light, like that beneath the sea; at either end of it a grey wall of falling water shut off our view.

When we emerged from the cave Cheremi and the stranger carried us across the waist-deep Lumi Shala on their backs, balanced precariously on their shoulders, surrounded by what seemed an infinity of rushing water, milky-greenish in colour and seeming to snap up at us with millions of white teeth as the raindrops struck it.

After that, it was only fifteen miles up the beds of streams, across damp expanses of green and crimson and grey-blue shale, and along narrow ledges suspended between two vaguenesses of grey, until we came to the village of Thethis, on the headwaters of the Lumi Shala.

We came to it suddenly—a high-lifted sweep of rock, like the prow of a gigantic ship wedged between the sides of the narrowing valley. It towered a thousand feet above our heads, and on either side of

"My house!" she repeated, "I want my house!"

it a white waterfall plunged from the sky and roared into grey depths below.

We followed the side of a narrowing chasm, climbing backwards and forwards like ants on the side of the cliff, making for the top of one of those waterfalls. We reached it, and, standing in a welter of spray on a tiny rock-ledge, hung over that vista of roaring water and granite cliffs to admire the workmanship of the three-foot wall of stone that held up the trail. The Albanian who was with us had made it, and he was very proud of it.

Then the trail turned the shoulder of the cliff, climbed up a gorge so narrow that the two-foot stream covered its bottom, turned again, and came out on a little plateau. There was a wide stream running across the flat space; its water was milky green with melted limestone, and it was strewn with large smooth round boulders.

A bridge of two logs, with a railing of twisted branches, ran from boulder to boulder across this incredible river, and we stood on it, gazing at a cliff that rose before us, striped rose and green and grey and white in long jagged lines, as though it had been painted. Suddenly, overhead we heard an outburst of cries, like a hundred sea-gulls shrieking in a storm. We looked higher, and there on the top of the cliff we saw a score of boys, naked except for bright loin-cloths, engaged in acrobatics.

They made pyramids of their wet white bodies; four, three, two, one, they stood on each other's shoulders, and the four who upheld the pyramid ran swiftly along the edge of the cliff, passing and circling about a similar pyramid. The pyramids melted, as though dissolved in the rain, and formed again, while all along the edge of the precipice other boys made a freize of living bodies, turning cart-wheels, jumping over one another, walking on their hands.

We stood paralyzed. What did it mean? Then there was a fusillade of shots; the cliffs around us crackled, and through the din came multiplied shouts. Four tall chiefs appeared on the cliff-trail, gorgeous in black and white and red and blue and green and silver. We were being welcomed to Thethis!

The shouts redoubled, rifles cracked from every rock, the church bell wildly rang, and through the clamour, deafened and a little dizzy, we came into the village of Thethis. The four chiefs, having greeted us ("Long life to you! Glory to your feet, glory to the trails that brought you!" they said), preceded us up the last breathless quarter of a mile of trail, and all along the way the boys turned handsprings on the cliff-tops.

The village of Thethis is built on the plateau that tops the gigantic, ship-like rock wedged in the narrow head of Shala valley. All around it rise the snow-capped mountains, seamed with white waterfalls. Thethis itself contains perhaps thirty large, oblong stone houses, scattered at wide intervals, and all the land is divided neatly into squares by stone fences; some fields for corn, some for grain, some for meadow. In the midst stands the church, a two-storey building, oblong and grey, with a network of trodden paths leading to it.

It seemed a quiet, peaceful place. But on the mountains above it to the north the Serbian armies lay; their mountain-trained eyes were doubtless watching us as we crossed the sodden fields. This is the village whose houses were destroyed by a company of soldiers sent by the infant Albanian Government in Tirana. The Serbs held the Albanian cities where the men of Thethis have always gone to market; the grazing lands where they have always fed their sheep lie in the grasp of Serbian armies. Scutari, the nearest free Albanian market-place, is a hundred miles away across two mountain ranges, wherefore it was said that Thethis was friendly to the Serbs; it was said that her men still went to market in the Albanian cities that now belong to Serbia, that spies came and went across the border, that the chiefs listened to the clink of Serbian gold. And Alex and I remembered that in Thethis we were not to address Rroc Perolli, Secretary of the Albanian Minister of the Interior, by his real name.

But he was behind us on the trail—doubtless still engaged in trying to get breakfast for Betsy in the house we had left—and we went forward with easy minds to meet the priest, Padre Marjan. He came barefooted and bareheaded across the fields to welcome us, a thin, ascetic-looking man in the brown robes of a Franciscan friar. He spoke to us in Albanian, Italian, and German, ushering us with apologies into the bleak rooms above the church.

The Serbians and Montenegrins, he told us, in their drive down toward Scutari, had looted the church. He had come into Thethis two months ago, and found not even a wooden stool left. He was doing his best, but it took time.

The rickety broken stairway led upward to a long hall; from this a door let us into the living-room. It was bare, with rain-stained wooden walls and a floor that clattered beneath our feet. The one window was shattered. There was a long wooden table and a bench, but no fire. Our soaked garments suddenly felt cold on us, and a chill entered our very bones.

The only fire in the house, he said, was in the kitchen. We begged him to take us to it, and in a moment we were sitting on a bench before a crackling fire in a big stone fireplace. The tiny room was crowded with villagers, and more arrived every moment. Padre Marjan had no servant, but all were eager to help him. Some took off our shoes, others heated water over the

fire, a handsome youth, who looked Serbian and talked German, beat eggs and sugar together, and Padre Marjan made coffee. The warmth and the genuine welcome thawed us and made us happy, and we sat drinking the heartening mixture of eggs and coffee, while clouds of steam rose from our wet garments, and a babble of talk went on.

One tall handsome chief—Lulash, his name was—brought us a lamb as a gift. Another came with a fat hen, others with eggs; all were eager to roll cigarettes for us, all were smiling, and in a hundred beautiful phrases they overwhelmed us with thanks for our coming, for our presence, for the school that Alex and Betsy had promised Thethis. This was to be the first of the mountain schools, and Alex, who had come into the mountains to decide where to put the other two, was delighted to learn that already, before the building was begun, Padre Marjan had started the school, and Lulash had promised a hundred trees to be burned to make lime for the building.

A little girl of the mountains.

We sat talking of these things while Padre Marjan set pots of soup boiling in the fireplace, broke eggs, unlocked his box of precious flour, and busied himself with preparations for dinner, until another outbreak of echoing noises announced the arrival of Betsy and Perolli and Rexh and our men with the packs. We felt a little anxious when Perolli came in, noting the keen eyes of the men fixed on his English clothes and swarthy, intelligent face. He is as tall as most Europeans, but he was small among those giants, and the neat leather-holstered revolver and dagger that hung from his belt looked inadequate among all those long bristling rifles.

But Padre Marjan, unaware of our apprehensions, was altogether the happy welcoming host. He greeted the dripping Betsy warmly, anxious only to make her comfortable—she who was responsible for the hope of a school in Thethis. He welcomed Perolli also, calling him by his first name. "How does he know that Perolli's name is Rroc?" we girls asked one another, with startled eyes. Then, turning to the chiefs with a radiant smile, he announced: "This guest is Rroc Perolli, the Secretary of the Minister of the Interior in Tirana!"

Instantly the wildness and savagery of the mountains seemed to come into the room. A hundred miles of almost impassable country lay between us and any kind of help. There we were, three girls and a man, alone in the narrow valley beneath the eyes of the Serbs—the Serbs who, six months earlier, had caught Perolli and condemned him to death!

Every hitherto friendly eye about us had narrowed, every lip tightened a trifle. A thousand currents of antagonism, distrust, intrigue, seemed like tangible things in the air; only Padre Marjan remained warm, innocent, and smiling.

None of us four—certainly not Perolli—doubted that we had just heard his death-sentence spoken. And I realized again the depths below depths in the Albanian mind, when I saw him smile, easily and naturally, and heard him saying, "Long may you live!" to the circle of his enemies.

"And to you, long life!" said they, while he offered them cigarettes and they rolled others in exchange. He sat down easily on the bench before the fire; and we three girls moved forward and sat beside him. The chiefs again took their places on the floor, the foremost of a mass of bodies and faces, and Padre Marjan moved in and out and around us all, stirring and seasoning the contents of the pots that bubbled in the fireplace.

"Talk to them; say something!" said Perolli in a careless tone, offering me a cigarette.

"Thank you," said I in Albanian, taking it. "Tell them that I come from California, the most beautiful part of America, and that I have seen the American mountains and the mountains of Switzerland, but that I have never seen such beautiful mountains as those of the Land of the Eagle. (They will not do anything while we are here, will they?)"

Perolli translated. "They say, 'Glory to your lips,' he told me. Do you live among the American mountains? ('No; not unless they get me alone.')"

"In America we cannot live among such mountains. We cannot climb such trails; we are not strong, like the Albanians. When we go any distance we ride, and we have forgotton how to walk up cliffs. We have

rich, soft houses, and we travel everywhere on soft cushions, and all our life is easy. But old men still remember when our life was hard and rugged, as it is here, and I have seen in America houses of stone, like these, with very small windows and pegs on the walls where rifles were hung. For our fathers' fathers lived hard lives surrounded by enemies, as the Albanians do now, and some old men still remember those days. (Do you want me to keep them talking ?) "

" They say, ' What has made the change ? Have you cut down your mountains ? ' (Yes ; I want a little while to think.) " And he leaned back and crossed his knees and lighted another cigarette.

I told them some more about America, and Perolli translated at length. When he had finished Lulash rose, very splendid with his six feet of height, a snowy turban with folds beneath the chin outlining his strong, sensitive, sun-browned face, silver chains clinking against the jewel-studded silver pistols in his orange and red sash. He made a beautiful speech, graceful with a hundred flowery metaphors, thanking us and America, in the name of his village, his tribe, and all his people, for the school and the hope it brought.

" I," he said, " am a great chief ; I have a great house and large flocks and much silver, and all that I have I would give if I could read. I am a chief of Thethis, and my people look to me. Many things are happening outside our mountains that mean much to my people, and I cannot learn what they are and what they mean, because I cannot read. Every night I come to Padre Marjan and study the little black marks, and long afterward I lie awake in my house and am shamed before myself for the ignorance of my life. But you have brought learning into my village ; our children will know more than we. Our hope is in the children ; they will be little torches leading us out of the darkness. You have lighted these torches, and I say to you, for Thethis, for Shala, and for the Land of the Eagle, our hearts are yours to walk upon. Long may you live ! "

" Go on a smooth trail," said we, as he went out, all the other men following him. Then, released from their observant eyes, we looked at each other with all the fear we felt.

" What will they do ? Did he mean what he said ? Can we expect any protection from him for you ? " Betsy asked Perolli.

" Who knows ? " said Perolli. " We Albanians use many words. They have gone to hold a council. All their immediate interests lie with the Serbs. If they hand me over—well, you know the Serbian armies hold their markets and their grazing lands, and a million Albanians are in Serbia's power. The Government at Tirana has nothing like that to offer these chiefs as yet."

" But we are guests—we are women ! " we exclaimed.

" Oh, they won't act quickly. But the trails are long in the mountains. Let me think," said Perolli. And we were silent, watching Padre Marjan busy about the cooking.

The hours went by, with a steadily increasing tension on one's nerves. Perolli did not disguise a very earnest desire to save his life ; but he was Albanian. He laughed as usual, he sat on the bench before the fire and told stories, and he joked with Padre Marjan. Only occasionally the thoughts beneath the surface of his mind rose and engulfed him in a dark silence. At dinner he ate with a good appetite.

When the chicken came, Cheremi presented it with awe in his eyes, and after we had eaten he whispered behind his hand to Perolli. In the kitchen, he said, they were talking of the chicken ; it had been hatched and brought up in the village, and they were sure that its backbone would foretell the immediate future of Thethis. Would we let him have it ?

Perolli took up the thin bone and very carefully cleaned it of every bit of flesh. Then with an apology to Padre Marjan, he held it up to the light from the window. Through the translucent bone the marrow, clouded with clotted blood, showed clearly, and Perolli read it with serious eyes, pointing out to us its meaning. There was a clot that meant a battle, a battle to the north, and there was a widening red line running from a dark spot. The signs were clear ! The Government would grow more powerful, and there would be war to the north—war with the Serbs.

He gave the bone to Cheremi, who tiptoed toward the kitchen with it. I strained my ears to hear how it was received ; I thought that the portent of strong government might make the people think it unwise to hand Perolli over to the Serbs ; they must know that in any case his death would be avenged by soldiers from Tirana. But *would* it, since he was ostensibly " on a holiday " ? Governments do not usually back up secret service men who fail on the job. And so, feeling very miserable and anxious, we girls went to bed on thin mattresses filled with straw and laid on raised boards.

(*To be continued.*)

THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME POSTMAN

by W. HERBERT HOLLOWAY

Photographs by PATHÉ PICTORIAL FILMS.

Those who are in love or in debt may find a thrill in the postman's knock, but the letters the average man receives at breakfast time are taken very much as a matter of course. Even an Editor is apt to scan his morning mail and wade through his daily dose of manuscripts without giving a thought to the elaborate organization which is necessary to effect their safe delivery into his hands, though some of them may have come from the very heart of Africa or Asia. The post-bag of the Editor of THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE is probably more interesting than that of any other Editor in the world. His readers and contributors are scattered all over the globe, and vivid stories of adventure written "on the spot," reaching him from the most remote corners, are duly published and eagerly devoured without either Editor or readers having time to ruminate upon the long journeys some of the manuscripts have made. The accompanying set of photographs, depicting the transmission of a letter from the heart of Africa to the outskirts of civilization, sheds a new light upon an intensely interesting subject and gives one "furiously to think."

HERE is Mr. Globetrotter, a regular contributor to our pages, who has just finished his article describing, let us imagine, a big-game hunt in Central Africa, and desires to post his "copy" to England.

Roads and railways are still non-existent in these parts, and there is no red pillar-box "just round the corner." He therefore hails his native messenger—a very well-dressed gentleman for these parts, his garment being more expansive, though less expensive, than some we have seen worn by the ladies at home—and hands him the letter in a cleft stick.

This cleft stick serves a dual purpose—it prevents the letter from becoming unduly soiled in the many perspiring hands through which it is destined to pass, and it constitutes a sort of "badge of office," so that the native runner may instantly be recognized as a postman, and be given right of way.

Off he trots through the jungle, and though he travels barefooted, and the undergrowth is tangled and matted, he maintains a good steady pace, making his way towards the White Nile—that long, long trail of water which flows steadily northwards towards cities and civilization.

It is no sinecure, this barefooted journey of his, for danger is always lurking in these wild and untamed places, and you may be sure that our swarthy postman is armed with a slender spear, and possibly a knife made from soft metal, such as hoop-iron, for self-protection.

Eventually he reaches a Dinka or Shilluk village, which consists of a number of conical grass huts clustered on the bank of the river, surrounded in most cases by a thick thorny palisade fashioned to keep both humans and cattle alike safe from the prowling beasts of prey during the impenetrable darkness of the African night.

At the front door of one of these huts he is greeted by a tall Dinka tribesman—the fellow depicted is by no means above the average height, for many of his neighbours stand well over seven feet, and the letter

changes hands. It is now about to leave dry land for a while and embark on its journey down the river.

From the regions far south, where it flows sluggishly through the impeding masses of *sudd*, right up to its mouth, the Nile bears many strange craft, from *feluccas* to large cargo boats with sails, from native-built craft of weird and wonderful design to the smartest thing in launches and house-boats.

The craft with which we are immediately concerned is the *ambatch* raft or canoe, which can be seen in all the villages, propped up against the side of the huts, drying in the blazing Sudan sun.

Whilst our lanky friend, having said "Good-bye" to the "missus" and his offspring, is carrying his canoe and the letter down to the water, we may as well study the construction of this primitive yet neat little craft. It is made from the stems of a plant that grows in the water near the banks of the river. When cut, these stems are tied into long narrow bundles, which, in turn, are securely fastened together to form a shallow boat, wide in the beam and coming to a sharp point at the bow.

The *ambatch*, when thoroughly dry, is extraordinarily light and easily portable, yet it will hold two men quite comfortably until it gradually becomes water-logged, when it

has to be propped up on end again to dry in the sun—incidentally providing a shady shelter for its owner.

Once in his boat, with the stick carrying the letter stuck in front of him, the gallant Dinka carefully poles his way through the swamp until he reaches the open river.

Here his part of the mail-carrying contract comes to an end, for he encounters three tribesmen in a stumpy

dug-out canoe, who take over the "black man's burden" and paddle away upstream. They skim along at a good speed, for these blunt-nosed clumsy-looking craft move pretty rapidly when propelled by the long paddles and brawny arms of their crew.

Presently, on rounding a bend in the river, they espy a boat moored alongside the river banks. This boat is of a type peculiar to the Nile, and is called a *gayassa*. It is a broad-built, comfortable vessel with a high curving bow, on which is a tiny bowsprit. We shall obtain a better view of her when she presently slips her moorings and sails away.

Meanwhile, with our usual keen perception, we assume that there must be a European aboard this particular vessel, for part of the deck is boarded in to make a rough kind of cabin—quite an unnecessary luxury from the native point of view.

The paddler in the bows of the canoe hands the letter to a white-clad Sudanese "boy" with the request that the letter be delivered at the first post-office or Government station that the traveller may pass. Needless to say, such a request is never refused, and the canoe men depart, probably quite content with a very little "baksheesh," for the Sudanese is not so difficult to please as the native of tourist-ridden Egypt.

The grapnel that serves as an anchor is hoisted, the great sails swell into beautiful lines as they catch the warm wind, and the *gayassa* is on her way. Now is our opportunity to study her build.

She has two short masts, but the spars are enormously long, towering high above the deck. This is to ensure that when the vessel is sailing between high banks the top portion of the sail shall catch the wind. She sails away graceful as a bird, steadily eating up the miles until dark, when she is moored until early dawn.

After some days of travelling, those on board observe that the papyrus growing alongside the river is becoming less and less luxuriant. Presently, flat, sandy banks appear, dotted with sleeping crocodiles and great flocks of birds of many kinds. Most of them appear to take very little notice of the boat except perhaps the flamingoes, who try to keep pace with her.

Soon, near the river, a flat-roofed town appears, dusty, dry, and hot, beyond which the white desert stretches away for miles—apparently endless. The *gayassa* comes to within a few yards of the shore, drops her anchor, and another stage of the journey is over.

Here our letter waits awhile, eventually to join others in a mail-bag which is brought ashore.

This bag is handed over to the desert messengers, whose fast-running Bishareen camels are awaiting, grumbling, burbling, snapping, supercilious, and, as usual, in the worst of tempers. Grunting and complaining, they ungracefully lurch to their feet, and another stage has begun.

Out into the pitiless desert they go, the almost white sand reflecting the furnace-like heat, miniature whirlwinds throwing up the fine sand, and perhaps an occasional sand-spout travelling rapidly across their path. The messengers keep steadily on, their heads and faces wrapped up in their robes. Mile after mile flies past, for the Bishareen are fleet, and can travel hour after hour without faltering or resting.

At last they come to another mud-walled town. The camels are made to kneel down, the riders dismount, and safely deliver the precious mail-bag to an official who adds that of postmaster to his other duties.

The final stage of the journey towards civilization is made in a speedy, shallow-draught Government steamer, propelled by a paddle-wheel at the stern. This quaint craft carries our letter to the railway, where it is put on board a long white train, which will take it *viâ* Khartoum to Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, or perhaps some hundred miles farther north to Wadi Halfa on the Nile.

At this stage the romance of the journey is past. Railways and steamships, mail-vans and sorting-offices are prosaic as compared with the primitive conveyances which have carried our letter from the wilds.

Short Stories

CAUGHT BY A CROCODILE.

By LIEUT.-COL. GORDON CASSERLY.

Illustrated by W. E. HOLLOWAY.

What happened to a British officer who went down to a crocodile-infested river in East Africa to fill his water-bottle. Small wonder that for months thereafter he suffered from brain-shock!

THROUGH the scrub jungle and long grass of a certain stretch of East Africa a small column was marching—cheery, black-faced fighters of the African Rifles, and graver, but not less gallant, brown men of an Indian regiment. They were out to pay a call upon a certain tribe that had amused itself by making war on the great British Empire. That colossus is patient and long-enduring; and certainly the tribesmen's "war" was hardly more than a series of flea-bites.

But flea-bites irritate after a while; and a certain lobe in the giant's brain—represented by a few gentlemen in office-chairs in Whitehall—finally sent a motion to a finger of the hand, which is the British Army. That finger, in the shape of this small column, was now engaged in scratching the irritated spot and striving to locate the elusive fleas that caused the itching.

As a matter of fact this small body of troops was engaged in a task that seemed as hopeful as catching wasps with sugar tongs. The country was vast and ill-watered, save near a wide river, from which the column could never go far; and the tribesmen were nomads with no fixed abodes, owning tents instead of villages, their other possessions being, in order of importance, weapons, cattle, and wives. The soldiers grew leg-weary in fruitless chases after an enemy who, always getting early information of their coming, acted like the Arabs in the poem and silently stole away.

The troops almost grew to disbelieve in their existence, and inclined to be careless when not under the eyes of their British officers. This finally led to a tragedy. A detached party of over a score of Indian sepoys under a *jemadar* (native lieutenant) was marching one day along a winding path through grass almost higher than their heads. Carrying their weapons in casual fashion, the sepoys strolled along with a want of caution for which they were destined to pay dearly. Their bayonets were not fixed and their rifles—the single-shot Martinis considered good enough in those days for the Indian Army—were unloaded.

Suddenly a shot or two rang out somewhere to their left. The serpentining file of men halted, and turned in that direction, almost indifferently discussing who the firer could be; for they scarcely credited the possibility of the existence of any enemy near them. The high vegetation prevented them from seeing anything; and officer and men stood carelessly arguing. Suddenly, soundlessly, out of the long grass behind them broad-bladed spears were thrust deep into their unprotected backs, or savage men leapt at them and stabbed them to death with sharp knives. The *jemadar* and most of the sepoys fell dead instantly, a few struggled desperately but hopelessly, and soon not one was left alive.

The triumphant savages disappeared as quickly as they came; and only the silent corpses were left to tell the tale mutely to the dead men's comrades when search-parties found them.

This "regrettable incident" taught caution to the rest; and after that the troops were not to be surprised by human foes. They thought there were no others to be feared. It was necessary for the column to march always near the river, for only thus could it be certain of water. Every afternoon, long before the sun neared its setting, the force halted close to the bank; and, using the broad and rapid stream as one face of the defences, the men cleared a stretch for their bivouac and piled up the cut-down bushes to form a thorny hedge or *boma* around the rest of the perimeter of the camp. It was enough to keep out a rush of naked, spear-armed savages when aided by the defenders' bayonets and the storm of lead that even their single-loading rifles could send forth.

While the sepoys and their ebony comrades worked hard to secure the safety of the camp, the cooks prepared the evening

meal. Then, work finished, the hot and dusty men came to the river-bank and looked longingly at the cool water, wishing that they could refresh themselves with a bathe.

Seldom, indeed, could they indulge in the luxury. The wide river swarmed with crocodiles, not such as the sepoys had seen in India, where twelve feet is considered a great length for the blunt-nosed, man-eating *mugger*, but huge brutes twenty-four feet and more from snout to tip of tail.

Hippopotamuses were to be seen frequently, standing in the shallows on the bank, flopping into the water, splashing, blowing, floating on the surface or sinking into the depths. A British officer with the column shot one of these colossal brutes, but the monster got away, badly wounded.

Next day, as the troops halted near the bank for the midday meal a subaltern, drawing out his field-glasses, exclaimed :—

"What on earth is that in the river ?"

Floating down with the swift current was a huge object that looked like a collapsed balloon in the middle of a log-jam. The half-empty gas-bag bobbed up and down and swung round and round, while the logs were agitated wildly as if tossing on the swirling waters of rapids. Have you ever thrown a piece of bread into a river and seen it nibbled at by a shoal of minnows ?

So down this African river came the bloated carcass of the hippopotamus shot the day before, while scores of gigantic crocodiles struggled and fought savagely to get near it and tear away a fragment of its flesh. So closely were they packed in a heaving mass that a man could have walked around the hippo on their backs.

It was a sight not given many men to see, this agitated mass of horny bulks, through the thick armour-plating of which no rifle bullet could pierce. All the soldiers looking on it had faced death without shrinking many a time ; but the bravest of them shuddered at the thought of the fate that would be his if he fell among these scaly monsters to be torn to pieces by the gapped teeth of their terrible jaws. If any of the sepoys had questioned the wisdom of their officers in prohibiting bathing so often, they were convinced now.

One afternoon the column halted by the river as usual and prepared to camp. The ground cleared, the *boma* made, the sentries and pickets set, the men fell out to get their food and rest. Then, and then only, the officers saw to their own wants. A captain, unslinging his empty water-bottle, went to the river to fill it.

It happened that at this spot the bank was about four feet high and rose straight up. It curved in a sharp bend, and the water close inshore was shallow. There was no current there ; but only a few yards out the deep and mighty stream swept along like a mill-race.

The officer knelt on the bank and, lowering the bottle by its long strap, turned his head to speak to a *subhadar* (native company commander) near him. Half-a-dozen sepoys, some holding their rifles, were standing close by.

Suddenly out of the still water under the bank was thrust a monstrous head, and, like a trout rising to a fly, a huge crocodile snapped at the white man's outstretched hand. The great jaws closed on it ; and in a twinkling the officer was plucked from the shore and dragged down into the river !

As he fell with a splash into the water the astounded soldiers gasped in horror. Then, without hesitation, two or three of them leaped in after him, heedless of the danger that they ran from other crocodiles which, for all they knew, might be swarming under the treacherously calm surface. Standing waist-deep, they clutched their captain's body and strove to pull him away from the giant reptile, which was now backing out into deeper water.

The Englishman, his hand in the crocodile's mouth, was too dazed to struggle, and submitted passively to be pulled this way and that in the grim tug-of-war. The native officer snatched a rifle from a man beside him, and, jumping into the water, fired at the monster at a yard's range. A sepoy followed his example, but neither man thought of aiming at the eyes, and an old crocodile's tough hide is impenetrable to bullets except in the throat, belly, and behind the shoulders. So their shots had no effect.

The weight and strength of the brute was too much for the united efforts of the men pulling, handicapped as they were by being in the water. In vain others jumped in to help them, in vain they dug their heels into the yielding sand and strove with all their might and main. Slowly, remorselessly, the officer was drawn farther out, the very want of power of his would-be rescuers saving him from being torn between them and his terrible captor. The sepoys clinging to him were dragged with him as the monster backed out. With the devotion of native soldiers to their white officers, however, they still clung on, although at any moment more crocodiles might have swarmed up, when they would have been lost themselves.

The Englishman seemed doomed, and a shout of horror went up from the other officers and men who had rushed to the bank. The crocodile was swimming now, going tail foremost out from the still shallows under the projecting corner of the bend of the bank into the swift-racing flood of the main stream.

Then, at the last moment, a miracle happened ! When it seemed that nothing could save the man, the strong current caught the monster in full force and swept it away ; and by a marvellous happening the officer's hand was torn from its mouth.

The gapped and irregular teeth of a crocodile do not fit closely together ; and the Englishman's fingers slipped from between those that had fastened on them.

Amazed at the sudden cessation of the strain, the sepoys holding the captain staggered back and hurriedly dragged him into safety. Recovering from his momentary stupor, the officer tried to scramble up on to the bank again, and was drawn out of the water by many willing hands. Though the whole incident had been a matter almost more of seconds than minutes, the shots had alarmed the camp and brought every one to the scene.

So little injured was the captain that, after his hand had been bound up by the doctor, he was able to attend to his duties immediately. Asked by his comrades what his feelings had been during the terrible ordeal he said :—

"I felt nothing. It was as if my hand had been tied to a railway engine which was slowly dragging me through the water, painlessly but irresistibly. The power drawing me was so great that there was no question of struggling against it on my part. I simply went with it, that's all. No ; I felt no fear or suffering."

By the time the officer sat down to dinner that evening he had apparently completely recovered from the shock. After mess, when the time came to turn in, he went to his tent like the others and got into bed. Silence settled on the camp. Only the sentries were awake, peering into the darkness across the thorny hedge of the *boma*. Suddenly wild cries came from the part of the bivouac where the officers lay sleeping. Every one was aroused. Hands snatched at rifle or revolver as men of all ranks threw their blankets off and sprang up.

"The native officer snatched a rifle from a man beside him and fired at the monster at a yard's range."

It was then discovered that the sounds came from the tent of the officer who had so nearly been the crocodile's victim. His comrades rushed to it and found him raving as if delirious. He believed that swarms of crocodiles had come out of the river and, surrounding his tent, were striving to force an entrance into it and tear him to pieces. He had seen them, he asserted ; he could still smell them and hear the snapping of their iron jaws outside the canvas walls of his tent.

It was only a nightmare or a brain-shock, of course, due to his awful experience, but it was only with the greatest difficulty that he was persuaded the vision was not real. He

refused to go to sleep again, and passed the rest of the night on guard with a weapon in his hands.

Strange to say, every night after that the same thing happened. No matter how fatigued he was when he went to bed, he always had the same terrible nightmare, and aroused every one by his cries. In the daytime he laughed at, and was ashamed of, his fears, but always in the dark hours the horrible vision returned.

Things got so bad that at last, as long as the column bivouacked near the river, the captain insisted on his tent being pitched a mile or more away from the bank, although this meant its being placed well outside the *boma*. He preferred to camp thus alone, beyond the defences, exposed to the danger of being speared at night by savage enemies, rather than face the terrors that would inevitably assail him if he remained near the river. So much did he suffer in the neighbourhood of the water that the commander of the column was reluctantly obliged to allow him to run the risk of isolation.

Only when the troops reached better-watered country and were able to abandon the stream did the obsession pass away and leave its victim normal once more.

As a postscript I may add that a certain young captain of the Indian regiment, finding himself in temporary command of a small detached column, abandoned the rather too drill-booklike tactic of the senior officer of the expedition, made a dashing swoop on the enemy, surprised them at last, and captured a large amount of their wealth—their herds of cattle. His example was followed by his commanding officer; and the tribesmen lost more of their four-footed possessions. As they had taken care to bolt in time themselves not many of them were killed or captured, but they came to the conclusion that in the long run it does not pay to irritate the peace-loving British Empire.

And so the little war ended.

THE IDOL THAT JUMPED.

By CLIFFORD W. COLLINSON.

Illustrated by F. GILLETT, R.I.

An amusing little story concerning a "devil-devil" figure which the Author purchased from a "converted" Solomon Island chief, and the startling happenings that followed the transaction.

"BUT look here, my dear old bean," said I (or words to that effect), "you are a Christian! You no want him any more this feller Devil-Devil—he bad feller too much." For I wanted that idol very badly indeed—there was something about it that fascinated me—and I was having great difficulty in persuading the old Shortland Island Chief, Joni Gorai, to part with it.

The Marist Mission claimed him as a convert, but the wily old chief, when it came to actually parting with his beloved idol, evidently thought it prudent still to keep in touch with his former gods in case the promises of his new faith should prove delusive.

The idol was quite small as Solomon Island "Devil-Devils" go, only about thirty inches high—an ebony figure in a crouching position with mother-of-pearl eyes looking forth malignantly from under lowered brows. It was a menacing figure, fascinating by reason of its very repulsiveness.

Failing to get the idol myself from the old chief, I resorted to guile, and paid a call on the local missionary.

Him I chaffed about his famous convert, and so worked upon him that he took the thing up as a personal matter and vowed to deliver the idol to me within a week.

I must admit that he kept his word; moreover he did the thing well, for on the sixth day a flotilla of canoes, bearing most of the villagers, approached the Government Residence where I was staying, with the old chief's son leading the array and bearing on his knees the cherished idol. He himself was, apparently, not greatly concerned, but I gathered that his father was filled with woe and foreboding at the loss of this symbol of his ancient faith. And, curiously enough, his premonition of evil to come was startlingly correct, as will be seen later.

The idol that caused all the trouble.

The presentation was made in style. I made suitable return gifts to the young man and the leading villagers, harangued them in pidgin-English, and sent the old chief a

special gift of trade tobacco to help assuage his grief.

After sitting around for an hour or two the natives re-embarked and, the wind being favourable, most of them improvised sails from palm-leaves and paddles and skimmed away down the coast to their distant village.

I congratulated myself on having secured the idol, thanked the missionary, and considered the incident as closed.

Not so, however!

For the better understanding of what follows it will be necessary to explain in some detail the construction of the Government Office at Faisi, where I was staying.

It is a wooden structure of one room entered by a central door which leads from a veranda running along the front of the building. Facing you as you enter stands a long table set about with chairs, and half-right is a counter.

Behind the table—fully twelve feet from the door—is a high shelf on the opposite wall.

It is at this table that the Government officer performs his multifarious duties. Here he grants licences for many purposes, transacts Customs business, holds trials of thieves and murderers, sells postage stamps and sorts the mails, in addition to administering a district covering an area of over a thousand square miles.

Kavisi Batu.

The Commissioner has a small staff of native police and, at the time I speak of, these were under the command of a native corporal named Kavisi Batu, whose smartness was a constant pleasure to behold. What he lacked in inches he more than atoned for in upright and soldierly carriage, and his jet-black skin, his smoothly-clipped mass of hair (bleached to a light brown by the application of coral lime), and his snow-white teeth, in conjunction with a uniform consisting of an extremely tight and abbreviated khaki *lava-lava*, with leather belt buckled over a narrow red sash, combined to produce an effect at once smart and attractive.

The wharf and hut at Faisi.

He was an interested spectator of the handing over of the famous idol and, being ordered to do so, he—rather nervously I thought—carried it carefully into the office and placed it somewhat gingerly on the shelf, which, it will be remembered, stood opposite the door at a distance of about twelve feet.

My heavy luggage was in a shed close by, and the idol was therefore left on the shelf when the Commissioner and I closed the office at 5 p.m., and climbed slowly up the scrupulously-swept path between the young betel-nut palms to the Residency, perched on the very top of the hill behind.

The evening was spent as usual, chatting in the cool of the veranda, whilst outside the fireflies glowed in the warm scented dusk, and the little twinkle of lights on an anchored trading schooner came to us from the moon-lit waters of the harbour down below. As we crept into bed under our mosquito curtains we remarked on the uncanny stillness of the night, for the faint breeze had died completely away, and even the palm-leaves hung motionless and shining under the great tropic moon. There was a queer sense of something impending!

And at precisely six minutes to five next morning the thing happened!

Curiously enough, I had wakened just four minutes previously and, being still drowsy, was lazily groping in the semi-darkness for a box of cigarettes that lay on a rubber-wheeled tea-table by my bedside, when, without any warning, the foot of my bed suddenly rose up and the table, moving from under my hand, collided with the wall behind me!

Simultaneously there came the crash of glass from the dining-room and the clatter of plates and dishes from the kitchen.

I sat up in bed, gripping both sides with my hands, and through the open door saw the flag-staff outside, in the dim light of very early dawn, whipping to and fro like a cane, whilst in my room the pictures swung from side to side and my bed rose and fell like a bucking broncho.

Just then an apparition appeared at the door—the Commissioner in his pyjamas, holding on to the door-posts to keep his feet.

"Good morning, Dickie," I said.

"Good morning be hanged!" he roared. "This is what comes of pinching idols from the heathen—the worst earthquake we've had for years! Heavens above! Listen to that crockery!" And he plunged off in the direction of the kitchen.

I suppose the whole business lasted no longer than a minute—but it seemed an age. That's the worst of earthquakes; you can stand what's happening at the time, but you are wondering all the time what's coming next!

The tremors died away at last and we proceeded to take stock of the damage.

There was a good deal of broken glass and crockery, of course, but what annoyed us most was the fact that three bottles of whisky had fallen from their shelf and lost their precious contents. We'd only bought them the previous day, too! Here I might mention that, later in the day, I managed to "wangle" two free bottles from the store, having carefully pointed out to the manager that they might with advantage (to me) be entered, along with other broken bottles, under "Earthquake Account."

As a matter of fact we got off lightly, for inspection of the house itself, outside, showed that the whole building had shifted on its short pile supports and was precariously poised on their extreme edges.

Another inch and the whole house would have crashed down to the ground, a distance of about four feet!

We were still wandering about in our pyjamas with scared parroquets and white cockatoos fluttering over our heads, when the padding of bare feet on the garden path announced the breathless arrival of the black corporal, who halted and stood to attention with heaving chest and goggling eyeballs.

"What name, Kavisi Batu? (What is it?)" snapped the Commissioner.

"Devil-Devil, sar!" gasped out the boy.

"Ha!" said the Commissioner, turning to me, "that infernal idol—didn't I say so?" Then again, to the corporal: "You think this big feller Devil-Devil he make him earth shake-a-shake? Eh?"

"Yessar," replied Kavisi Batu, nodding his head vigorously.

"What name?" queried Dickie, meaning "Why?" this time.

The boy explained eagerly.

"Time earth he shake-a-shake, me go look-see along office. Office he all jiggered up; wharf he all jiggered up! Me open him door little-bit along office—me look him this feller Devil-Devil. *Devil-Devil he sit along doorway!*"

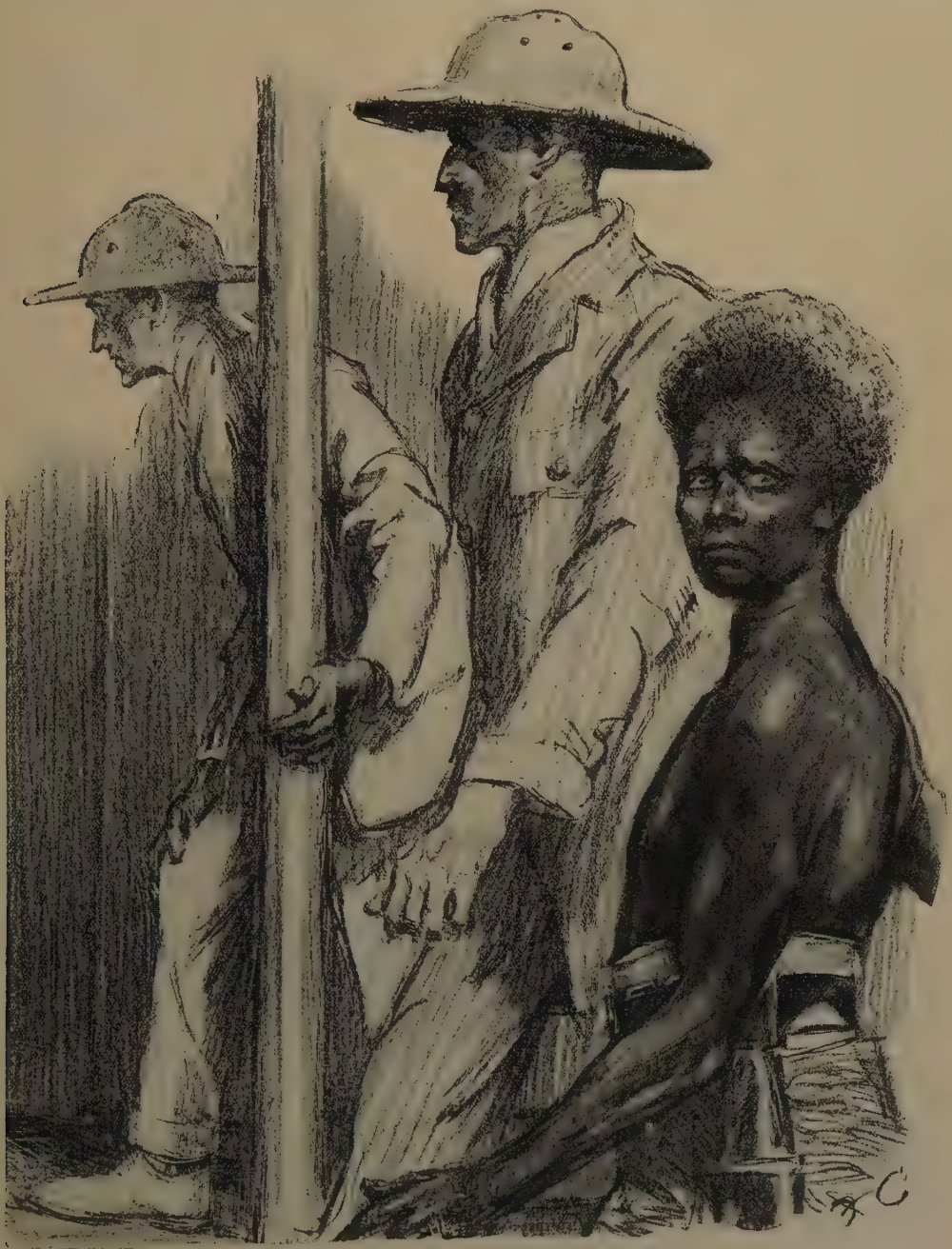
"*Doorway?*" I echoed in surprise. "Along night-time he stop along shelf, right

over on the other side of the room ! "—and I pointed with my hand.

" Devil-Devil he stop along doorway, sar," repeated the corporal firmly. And added hesitatingly : " Me think — me think——"

" Well ! *What* do you think ? " roared Dickie, in a fever of impatience to get away down the hill and see how much damage had actually been done to his precious wharf and office.

" Yessar ! " blurted out Kavisi Batu. " Along night-time Devil-Devil he want to go back along village belong him. He no stop along shelluf. He walk-about along office ! Devil-Devil he look him door belong



" I must confess to a queer thrill as I peered through the half-open door of that office."

office. Door he shut! Devil-Devil he shake him door. Door he no open! Devil-Devil he plenty cross—he shake him this feller door strong feller too much. *All earth he shake-a-shake!*"

"Unscientific but ingenious," commented Dickie, as we struggled into our shirts and pants and hurried down to the office.

Sunrise was now imminent and the light was getting stronger, but I must confess to a queer thrill as I peered through the half-open door of that office and saw my idol crouched facing me within a foot of the opening, his pearl-shell eyes gleaming malignantly in the half light.

How he had got there puzzled me! How that top-heavy image had jumped down from a six-foot-high shelf, hopped twelve feet across the room, dodging a perfect maze of table and chair legs, and stopped opposite the doorway, right side up and facing the entrance, even now seems strange to me.

It seemed doubly mysterious on that eventful morning in the eerie half-light of the dawn, and, to be perfectly candid, I didn't half like it! He looked so *actively* malignant, too!

A shout from Dickie, round at the back, made me pull myself together, and I hurried round to view the damage.

The whole building was twisted sideways and at diagonal corners its "feet" were actually hanging clear of their supporting piles—the entire office being literally balanced on the two other corners!

The wharf had also collapsed sideways, and presented an absurdly drunken appearance in the level rays of the rising sun.

The sunshine revealed something more, too—a number of dots on the sea far away down the coast, which rapidly grew larger, and, with a great flashing of sunlight on paddles, presently turned out to be yesterday's fleet of canoes returning, with the chief's son once again in the forefront.

Our tempers that morning were none of the best—early morning tempers in the tropics seldom are—but now we had admittedly some excuse.

"This is abso-lutely *the limit*," said Dickie. "They've come to fetch their confounded idol back! Permit me to deal with these gentlemen," he added with ominous politeness. Thereupon he took up a commanding position on the tottering wharf, cleared his throat, and proceeded to address the floating mob.

I will pass over that painful scene, only remarking that Dickie has the gift of tongues, and that not one of the astonished natives even so much as set foot on shore.

Dickie is very much "Government" when he gets worked up. At the same time, he is universally beloved and respected by the natives, who trust his sterling sense of justice—the one quality that appeals to subject races the world over.

The flotilla faded away dejectedly and we returned to the buildings.

Not one of the boys would enter the office or go anywhere near the idol; so, after the badly-jammed door had been forced open, I entered alone, picked him up, and replaced him on the shelf, where he squatted scowling, whilst we tried to restore order to the chaos of books and papers that littered the floor.

Later in the morning, in response to the urgent request of my host, who alleged that the idol's presence was demoralizing the entire native population, I packed him carefully away in one of my heavy boxes and nailed him down good and hard, to the evident relief of the assembled black crowd, who firmly believe to this day that the famous "shake-a-shake" was undoubtedly the dire result of the removal from his ancient dwelling-place of "The Idol that Jumped!"

AN "OUT BACK" POST OFFICE.

VERY few of our readers, we imagine, could correctly guess the nature of the structure seen in the accompanying photograph. As a matter of fact it is an "out back" post office in an isolated country district of Canterbury, New Zealand, called Upper Waitohi. Each of the settlers has a small tin box in which the mail contractor places the letters; there is also a larger wooden box for outgoing mail. The arrangement sounds very primitive and precarious, but as a matter of fact the scheme works excellently, and letters seldom go astray.

The Merepur Mystery

by

A. ALEXANDER

ILLUSTRATED BY A. SINDALL

Showing how an Indian official acquired a reputation as an amateur Sherlock Holmes and incidentally solved a most puzzling mystery. "The events occurred as narrated," writes the Author, "but the names of persons and places have been changed."

IT has been said that chance plays a great part in the work of the successful detective, and this is undoubtedly correct. To the uninitiated the modern investigator appears to be a mysterious individual with an uncanny sense of deduction and an over-developed intellect, but very frequently he is nothing of the kind.

The regular detective, of course, goes through a special training to fit him for his work; but there are many men who, having no direct connection with crime, as understood from the police point of view, are frequently called upon to act as their own constables, detectives, and even judges, and in this connection occasionally come across some very interesting experiences. I refer to officials and others whose work lies in lands where the proportion of whites to natives is often considerably less than one per two or three thousand.

The writer was for a number of years employed in the transport of large sums of money in Bengal, and over a period of some seven years handled a sum equivalent to four million pounds sterling in English currency, the whole of this being in the form of silver rupees. When it is understood that this amount of money approximates some *one hundred and seventy-five tons*, it will be seen that there is a big risk of theft. The transport officer has not only to keep a close watch on his work, but is often required to devise schemes to safeguard the treasure in his keeping or to investigate a robbery.

Strangely enough, the first case in which I was required to use such detective abilities as I possessed was not in connection with my own bullion, but with some belonging to the Indian Government. It was the successful solution of this mystery that caused me to be called in on several other occasions to inquire into sundry strange happenings.

It happened in this way.

I had gone to a river station which we will call Merepur in my twin-screw steam yacht, the *Serge*, with the sum of one hundred thousand rupees, and was to await the arrival of a further fifty thousand rupees by rail, expected some time the next day.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and as we came up to the jetty, it was seen that a large Government launch, the *Hawk*, was already tied up, making it necessary for us to lie alongside this vessel in order to obtain access to the shore. The jetty itself was one of those flimsy bamboo structures typical of Bengal. Standing on the shore-end was a European whom I immediately recognized as Carlyon, an important official of the General Post Office.

"Hallo, Sandy!" he called as I crossed the *Hawk* to the jetty. "How are you?

"I am experimenting in your line of business to-day," he continued. "I've got a cargo of 'tackers' (rupees) on board the *Hawk*. As a matter of fact, I have come down for a few days' leave, and as there are twenty thousand 'dibs' to be delivered at the local office here I thought I might as well see it through."

"Well," I replied, "it looks as if the powers that be are really beginning to sit up and take notice. This is the first time that I have seen a *sahib* in charge of Government money. As a rule your people send the cash down in charge of a native *jhemadah* (watchman)."

"Perhaps I am being a little too conscientious," said Carlyon, "but it always

seems to me that there is a chance of some going astray."

"My dear fellow," I replied, "you must remember that we are in a more or less uncivilized country, and although the wily native would go out of his way to steal two or three rupees, the idea of robbery on a large scale would not appeal to him. If we were in dear old London town I am not quite sure if it would be possible for you to get from the Mansion House to the Bank of England without an armed guard—that is, if the cash was handled as we manage it here."

I should explain that the invariable method of transporting bullion in India is in gunny bags, each holding two thousand rupees and weighing about half a hundredweight each.

"Why," I went on, "I myself have delivered bags to all parts of this jungle province, and have never had reason to suppose that there is any likelihood of danger. There was a convoy robbery on the Dacca Road some fifteen years ago by some escaped convicts, and a bag was stolen but recovered, but one rose doesn't make a summer."

"Anyway, you now have a chance of seeing an Assistant Postmaster-General doing his duty," laughed Carlyon. "After that we may as well drop down to the club and have a peg."

"I shall certainly want that to settle my nervous system after the performance," I returned, in the same vein.

The post-office to which the money was consigned was only a matter of some forty paces from the shore-end of the jetty, and almost immediately a string of coolies went on board the *Hawk* to fetch off the bags.

My own *serang* (captain), as well as the *serang* of the *Hawk*, was standing close to us when the coolies filed off, and, in spite of chatting to Carlyon, from sheer force of habit I automatically checked the bags as the coolies passed by, each with a sack on his head.

"That's the lot," said Carlyon, at last, as the coolies entered the post-office, the door of which was in a straight line with the jetty. "We'll go in, get the receipt, and then make for that iced drink."

Forthwith we entered the post-office, where the native postmaster was standing beside a pile of bags. He salaamed Carlyon and myself courteously as we approached, and in the peculiar English spoken by educated natives, said: "Good morning, your honours. I am hoping your excellencies are in very robust condition."

"So, so, *babu*," replied Carlyon. "Now hurry up with the receipt, please; I want to get down to the club."

"Yes, your honour. I will be ready at once if your honour condescends to tarry."

With that he went to his desk, and in a minute or so returned with a slip which he gave to Carlyon, who was about to put it into a wallet which he had taken from his pocket for the purpose when something possessed him to give it a second glance.

"Here, *babu*, this won't do," he exclaimed sharply. "This is only for eighteen thousand; you've had twenty thousand."

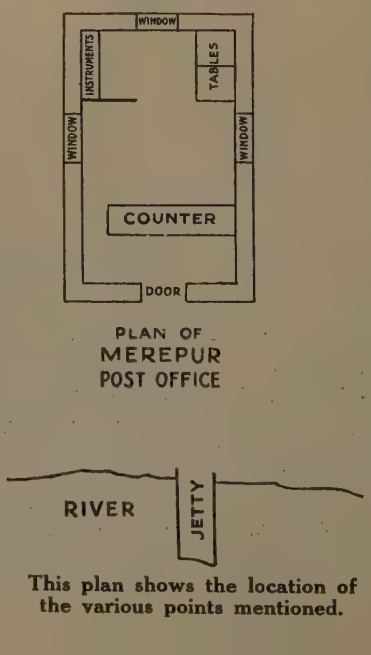
"No, your excellency. Only nine bags have been delivered to your humble servant. Look! there they are, as your honour observes."

Certainly there were only nine bags in the little pyramid before us, and at the moment it occurred to me that the tenth bag had been placed in some other part of the office.

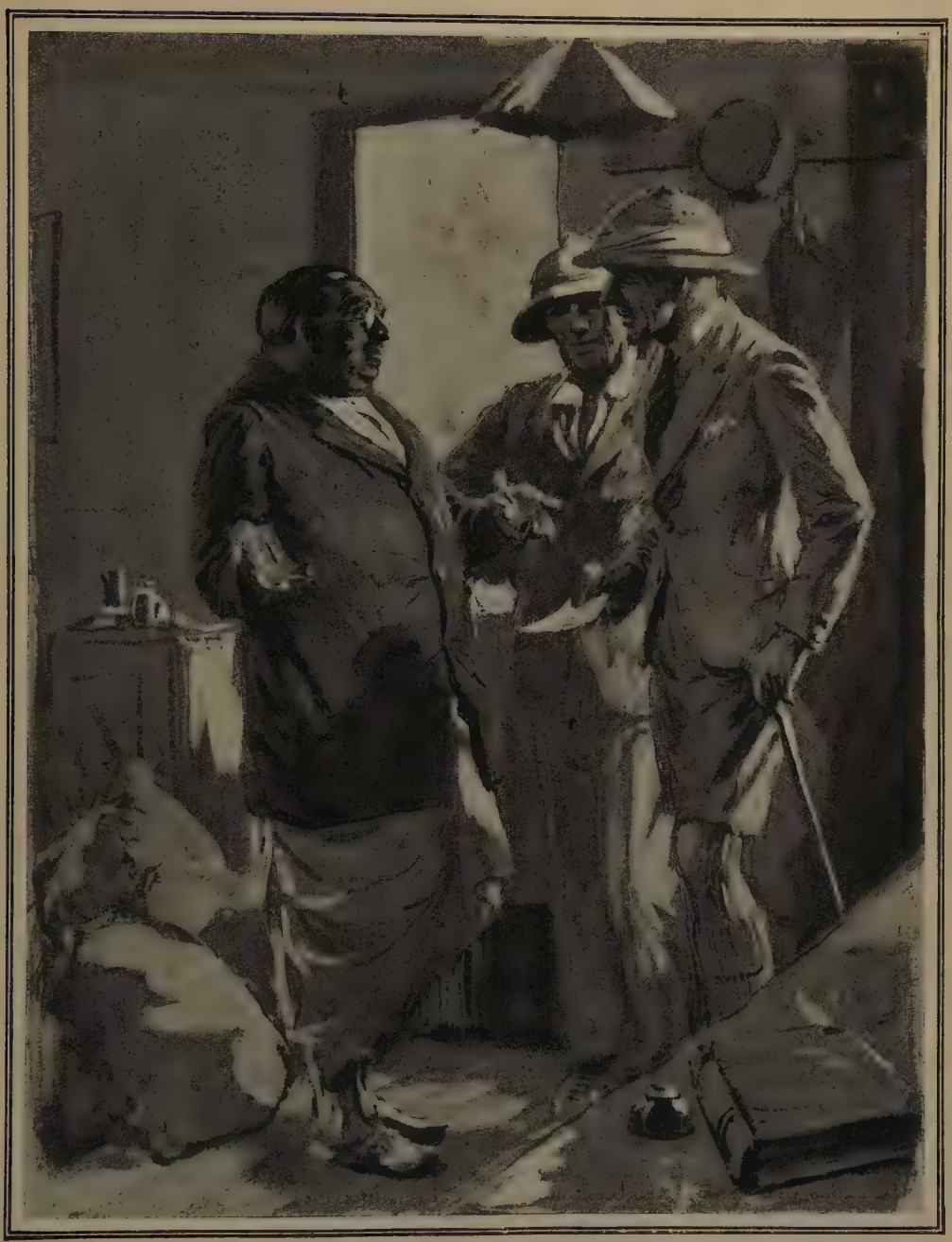
Now by no possible flight of imagination could the word palatial be suggested in connection with a Government office in Bengal, and I am inclined to think that the post-office at Merepur was even more bare, dismal, and uninviting than usual. It was merely a rectangular brick shell with a plain teakwood counter running across the building a few feet from the door. In the right-hand corner were a couple of tables with the usual leather covering, a good deal the worse for wear, as found in all other offices of a like nature, while half-screened by a small teakwood partition on the left side was a permanent bench on which were mounted the telegraph instruments.

Two chairs and a couple of stools comprised the furniture, while an iron safe—nothing more than an iron box secured to the wall by a chain and staple—completed the equipment, if we omit several untidy shelves filled with dusty piles of forms and stationery. Light was admitted through a window on either side and one at the far end, these being protected on the outside by an expanded metal lattice with a diagonal mesh of about two inches.

"Of course you've had ten bags in!" cried Carlyon. "I counted them myself. What the deuce do you mean by telling me a cock-and-bull story like this?"



This plan shows the location of the various points mentioned.



"'Here, babu, this won't do,' he exclaimed sharply. 'This is only for eighteen thousand.'"

"But your honours can yourselves observe without great hesitation that the maximum number of bags is only nine net," said the postmaster tremblingly.

"Now look here, Hari Kunta," replied Carylon, "you have opened one bag and put the money out of it in the safe."

"No, your honour; I am swearing before all the gods above this thing is incorrect. Only a sum of one hundred and fifty rupees were in the office before your excellencies' arrival, and that is all the loose cash here now. I am an honest servant of the *Sirkar* (Government), and misfortune would speedily

follow upon me if such a thing were committed by me."

"What do you think about it, Sandy?" Carlyon asked me, in an undertone.

"Why," I said, "we must have been so interested in our chat that we made a mistake in the tally. If you check the rest of your bullion you will find one bag excess."

"We took ten bags from the treasury," persisted Carlyon. "However, I will speak to the *serang*."

Karim Bux, the *serang*, being interrogated, most emphatically declared that the whole number of bags had been taken ashore. Being a good Mussulman he added a few uncomplimentary remarks concerning the Hindu unbelievers who could make such a mistake in counting a few bags. My own *serang*, Hamid Ali, also bore out the statement, saying that he had himself automatically checked the bags ashore, being inquisitive to know how much money went into the post-office. There was nothing for it but to search the post-office. This was a task of only a few minutes' duration, and rewarded with barren results.

The coolies were next examined. Out of a gang of some twenty or so who were waiting the arrival of a boat which was to be unloaded, the ten men who had carried the bags were quickly discovered. Each declared that he had duly dumped his load on the floor inside the office. The problem seemed inexplicable. It must be remembered that only a very short time had so far elapsed since the money was first sent ashore; it was doubtful if more than ten minutes had passed before we were confronted with the mystery.

It was obviously impossible, from the lie of the land, for the bag to have been taken to any other place than into the post-office without one of us being aware of the fact; and if Carlyon was correct in his statement that ten bags had been brought from the Treasury, common sense compelled us to assume that the bag was not very far away.

In addition to the postmaster, the staff inside the office at the time consisted of the telegraph operator and a second-grade post-clerk, both Hindus of the same caste as the postmaster. These men, on examination, declared their inability to give us any information, asserting that they were engaged in their several duties at the time.

A *jhemadah* who should have been on duty at the door of the post-office, and who usually attended to the delivery of the bags, was absent, we were informed, owing to a touch of fever.

Carlyon was for putting the matter in the hands of the police at once, but I pointed out that the only police available at the moment were natives and it seemed rather *infra dig.* to admit at such short notice that our own European brains were unfit to cope with the emergency.

"You had better put two of your own men from the launch on guard while we search the two vessels," I suggested.

"I don't need to search yours," he replied. "I don't think *you* are likely to have it."

"Perhaps you don't, but at the same time we'll do it," I told him.

We accordingly started a fore-and-aft search of the *Hawk* and *Serge*, but found no trace of the vanished rupees.

Coming to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by secrecy, we decided to offer a reward of fifty rupees for the discovery of the missing bag. My own *serang*, Hamid Ali, almost immediately took charge of affairs, and in a very short space of time the whole of my crew were either wading in the shallow water on the muddy foreshore or diving close to the *Hawk* and the jetty in places where it was possible for the bag to have been thrown. However, their efforts were entirely fruitless, and before we could take any further steps in the matter the sun had set, and there was nothing more to be done that night.

Before we went off to the club I gave orders for the *Serge* to warp out into the stream for, as I remarked to Carlyon, "if bags of rupees are starting mysterious journeys I don't think they are so likely to start from the middle of the river."

I had my own money safely locked away in the bullion-room of the yacht, and although I did not feel nervous about it I thought I should feel more at ease while it was secure from chance visitors.

After a short stay at the club we adjourned to the magistrate's for dinner, and on a cool veranda discussed the whole thing again from start to finish. The more we talked it over the more inexplicable the whole business appeared.

"I will look into the matter to-morrow," said Harcourt, our host, "but I must admit that, on the face of it, the affair appears incapable of any tangible explanation."

Carlyon said he had already given the mystery up as a bad job. He added that he was always pleased to see another Government department with enough to do to keep them out of mischief, and he was of opinion that the authorities would have little leisure on their hands for some considerable time if they did their duty to the State in recovering that bag of rupees.

I returned on board the *Serge* about eleven o'clock, found that nothing fresh had transpired, and retired to rest, being alongside the jetty at four o'clock next morning to receive my extra Rs. 50,000, which came in by the morning mail.

The money safely aboard, I was under way in a few minutes, and after a journey of some forty miles reached my destination, Ashugunge, about midday.

I do not think that I had ever before taken so much care to ensure that a correct

tally was kept on my cash as I did on this occasion, and I did not feel comfortable until I had received my receipt for the seventy-five bags.

This business completed, it was a case of about ship and away back to headquarters, which were reached about midnight. Here I received orders to pick up a further Rs. 200,000 and take them to a station some forty miles beyond Merepur, where the trouble had occurred the day before.

I was also to take an additional bag of two thousand rupees to the post-office at that station, this being a loan to the treasury, who could not send down money to replace that lost, as the distance was too great for it to arrive in time. I was further instructed to give the officials at Merepur any assistance in my power.

It so happened that I was short of fuel, so we moved alongside the coal *ghat*, and I did not pick up my valuable cargo until dawn the following morning.

My usual method of taking money on board was to have it carried straight on to the fore-deck so that it could easily be retallied if necessary.

I had duly taken on the one hundred and one bags, tallied them three times to make sure they were correct, and was sitting on the pile waiting for a messenger to come aboard with some letters, when my eyes fell on the odd bag which was to replace that so mysteriously lost at Merepur. The whole of that adventure came vividly before me, and in the cool morning air my brain seemed strangely clear.

The mistake, I argued to myself, must have occurred at the treasury; only nine bags were taken on board. All of us must have miscounted at Merepur, the coolies had lied, and we had made a big fuss about nothing. I came to the comforting conclusion that when I arrived at Merepur I should find that Carlyon had received a wire stating that the bag had been found.

Just then the mail came on board and I jumped off the pile of bags to give orders to get under way. As I did so my fingers came in contact with the corner of one bag into which a solitary rupee had lodged, right away from the mass in the rest of the sack. I gave the bag a shake and a couple more rupees joined the single one. And then I had one of those brain-waves that come to one now and then in a lifetime!

Shouting to the *serang*, I scribbled a *chit* and sent him on shore to the store *babu*, bidding him wait and bring off whatever was given to him. He was gone about half an hour, and meanwhile I kept guard over the bags and, like the parrot, thought a lot—quite a lot.

Presently the *serang* returned on board with a piece of expanded metal about a foot square, and having a mesh of similar dimensions to that which covered the post-office windows.

We were under way in a few minutes, and the work of packing my hundred bags of coin into the bullion room proceeded immediately. It was soon stored away below under lock and key, the odd bag destined for Merepur being left in the saloon. The subsequent proceedings, for the next half hour, were conducted privately by myself and the *serang*, Hamid Ali. Concerning these more anon.

Entirely satisfied, I gave orders to proceed under full steam to my farthest station, Balu bazaar, and then retired to my couch.

At 9.30 I awakened to find the leadsmen in the chains, and by their plaintive cry knew that our destination was at hand. The money was soon on deck, and as we were able to tie up at the station itself it was soon ashore, tallied, and the receipt obtained.

Then we turned again and set off for Merepur, which we reached shortly after midday. A stentorian blast on the siren announced our approach, and, to my delight, Carlyon, the magistrate, and a European police-officer came down to meet me.

The usual salutations having been exchanged, I immediately inquired what luck they had had with regard to the discovery of the missing bag. They were, they said, as wise as ever; the mystery remained insoluble. Carlyon had received news from headquarters that inquiry at that end proved that ten bags had been delivered to him.

Carlyon told me that he was wanting the two thousand rupees badly, as the large sum he had brought down was for use for repayment of Government bonds to a wealthy landowner.

I went ashore, accompanied by the *serang*, carrying the bag, and we were met on the threshold of the post-office by the postmaster.

"Where are your two assistants?" I inquired.

"They have departed, your honour, to house to refresh inner man," he replied. "The *jhemadah* he is sick of fever."

"Now, Carlyon," I said, "I am going to show you something. I want you, *babu*," I went on, "to give me a receipt for this two thousand rupees *outside* the post-office and let me take it in by myself. Do you agree to me doing this?" I asked Carlyon.

"Certainly," he replied, "but I'm dashed if I can see why the postmaster can't take it in."

"There are more things in Heaven and earth and post-offices than are dreamed of in your philosophy," I misquoted.

The postmaster went into the office and returned a few moments later with the receipt.

I then took the bag from the *serang* and,

going inside, returned a couple of minutes later without my load.

"Now, gentlemen," I said, "I should be pleased if you would step within while our worthy postmaster deposits the bag in the safe and locks it up."

They all followed me in with the exception of Hamid Ali, who had disappeared when I took the bag from him. To their great surprise there was no bag to be seen, and consternation was on all their faces, especially that of the postmaster, who tremblingly averred that devils had been at work.

I had paid particular attention to his demeanour, and was pleased to see that he was absolutely astounded at what appeared to him to be a further mystery.

"What game are you playing?" asked Carlyon, who, although puzzled, seemed to understand that I had in some unexplained manner hit on a solution of the mystery.

"I will show you," I replied, and raising my voice, I shouted: "Hamid Ali!"

The *serang* immediately appeared on the threshold bearing the bag, which further mystified the party.

"Lock up that bag immediately," I said to the postmaster in a chaffing tone. "It has got legs and wings and will get away again if you are not careful."

He dropped it into the safe and locked it up with more dispatch than I ever remember seeing a native use before or since.

"We have a good deal of work to do yet," I said; "we have yet to go and get the other bag. My work is done, and the rest is in the hands of the police," I continued, "but if you will instruct the postmaster to say nothing of what has occurred it will help matters materially."

Carlyon promptly gave the necessary instructions, and, at my suggestion, we all adjourned on board the *Serge*, where we spent the next hour or so in discussing tiffin. In the meantime I refused to say a word with regard to the more interesting affair ashore.

We had finished our meal perhaps some twenty minutes when Hamid Ali appeared at the door of the saloon and reported that the two clerks had returned from their meal.

"This is where we get busy," I said. "I want you all to accompany me to the bazaar. I should be obliged, Carlyon, if you would instruct your *serang* from the *Hawk* to bring a shovel along."

"Righto!" replied the official, and in a few minutes we were wandering through the crooked street of mat huts which constitutes the Merepur bazaar.

"You know where the assistant and the telegraph clerk live?" I inquired of the police inspector.

"Yes," he returned, "they are related, and live together a few doors farther on."

"Then," I said, turning to the magistrate, "if you will authorize the searching of this house and will dig up the floor I think that you will discover that which was lost."

To the consternation of the female part of the family, who were within, the two *serangs* got quickly to work, and in a few minutes turned up the bag and several other valuable articles.

I had been morally certain what the result would be, and thoroughly enjoyed the looks of amazement on the faces of the various people concerned.

Carlyon and the *serang* of the *Hawk*, having identified the bag, and satisfied themselves that the seal was intact, the inspector gave orders to a native constable to guard the premises and another to fetch a *daroga* (police sergeant) from the police-station. He also put the two juniors under arrest as well as the *jhemadah*, for, as I suggested, the postmaster was not concerned in the robbery in any way.

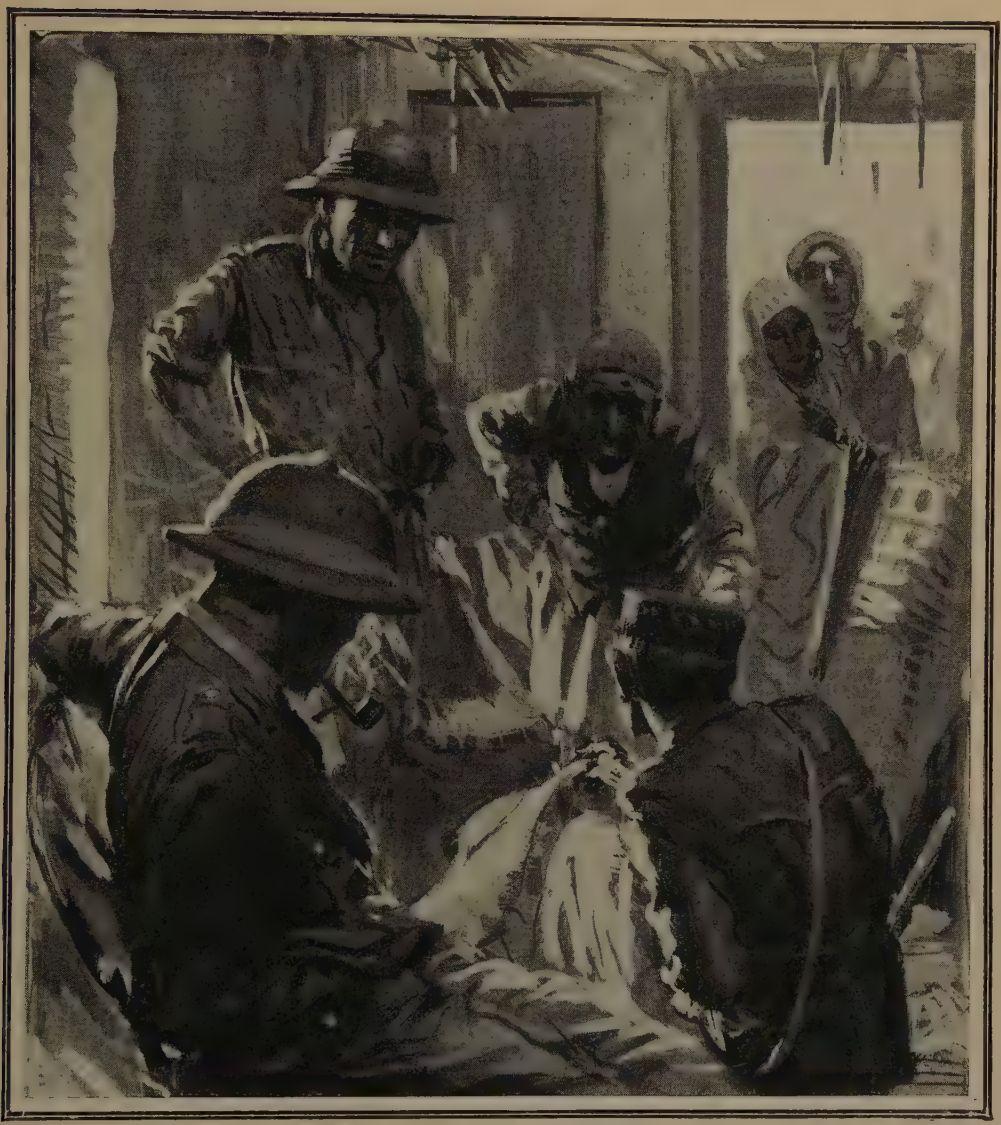
All necessary steps having been taken, we adjourned to the club. I was, of course, worried for some considerable time to disclose the solution of the mystery, and this I finally did as follows:—

"You see," I said, "it was necessary for me to discover first of all who would be likely to steal a bag containing so much money. I did not suspect the coolies, as they would not attempt such a thing while *sahibs* were about, and I very much doubt if they would have taken one if we hadn't been there, as the amount was too big.

"Then there were the crews on the boats. Those on the *Hawk* would be true to their salt, and I was pretty sure of my own men. There only remained the post-office staff themselves, and my suspicions first of all fell on them collectively, but I ascertained that the postmaster had been in the service for a long time, had a good character, and, notwithstanding his lengthy period of service, was a poor man.

"Now, had we been in good old England the fact of his being poor would have been a strong point against him, and this would have been further accentuated by the fact that he is about to give one of his daughters in marriage and has to find a considerable dowry for her. However, in India, had he been a rogue I am perfectly sure that, knowing what was before him, he would have been guilty of a system of petty larceny over a large number of years to prepare for things.

"As a matter of fact I have ascertained that he has raised a mortgage on his land, which has been in his family for generations, and by so doing placed an encumbrance on it which will not be cleared in his lifetime, and probably not in that of his heirs. This, as you are aware, is customary in Bengal, and the whole matter was so public that my own *serang* was able to give me information right away. It was, therefore, almost



"The two *serangs* got to work, and in a few minutes turned up the bag."

certain that he was poor because he had a higher standard of honesty than the usual run of clerical Bengali *babu*.

"The next people to consider were the telegraph clerk and the assistant clerk. One glance at either of these leaves the impression that they are not all that could be desired, and I may say that the particular style of shirts they wore, coupled with the fact that they both sported English shoes, while their senior did without these articles, still further added to my prejudice against them.

"I had noticed that they seemed to be looking at each other in a sly, underhand way when they thought that they were unobserved. A factor I overlooked, however, was the man who was not there—the *jhemadah*. We were, you remember, informed that he was sick from fever, and acting on that statement, I ruled him out of it altogether. That slight error I was not too late to rectify, and now you will see the problem put in a much clearer form.

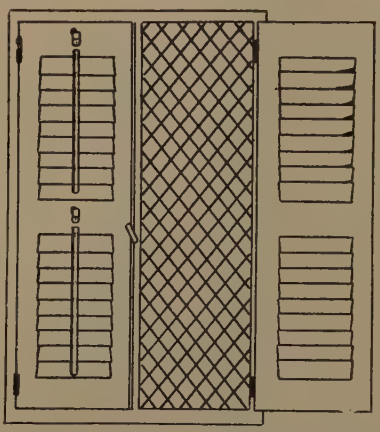
"We have a given number of bags, one of which is passed out of the office by one person, while a second person attracts the attention of a third, who is not aware of what is occurring. The two questions that require answering are :—

"(1) Who took the bag when it was passed out?

"(2) What method was used to pass it out?

"With regard to the first item, it would plainly be someone in some way connected with the office and well acquainted with those inside. My reasoning in this direction brought me down to the *jhemadah*, and for the time he was a loose part in the machine, to be fitted in when the rest of the puzzle was put together, so to speak.

"With regard to item number two, a little more thought was necessary, and as we were almost certain that the bag did not come out of the door, it followed that it was passed out by some other channel. Now the windows were guarded with wire-netting of a rather strong type; skylights and trapdoors there were none, and as you are aware, gentlemen, the Government does not go to the length of fitting heating appliances in Bengal. That leaves us with the ventilators—and there lay the solution of the whole affair."



Sketch of one of the wire screens that figure in this story.

"But there *are* no ventilators," interrupted Carylon. "I looked myself."

"Pardon, me, *mon ami*, but there you are mistaken. Even a Bengal post-office has to have air, and in this case the windows are used for this purpose. These same windows are made in the form of two *jhimil*, or Venetian doors, which open inwards, leaving the whole of the diagonal meshing of the wire screens open.

"The effect of a little pressure on all four sides of the diagonal materially extends the area of the opening; and then the neck of the bag—which you are aware contains a good deal of slack—was passed through the space, being well shaken up inside so that the rupees worked through a few at a time until the whole passed through. I found by experiment this morning that I could pass a whole bag through under half a minute. In fact, I brought some wire along with me to practise on.

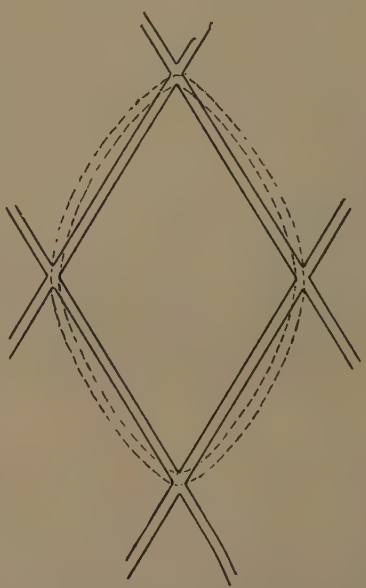


Diagram showing how pressure enlarged the openings in the wire mesh of the screens.

"When the coins had all been passed through, the *jhemadah* simply walked away from the back of the building, under cover the whole time, and took the bag away under his clothes. I discovered the identical mesh through which the bag was worked: the friction of the sack had cleaned it up noticeably."

"I suppose it must be as you say," said the magistrate, thoughtfully, "but having once got the money I can't understand why on earth they didn't split it up and so destroy all evidence."

"I think I can offer an explanation of that," I replied. "They did not intend to actually steal the two thousand rupees. What they meant to do was to intimidate the usual *jhemadah* from the treasury into paying twenty or thirty rupees for the recovery of it. He would do this and say nothing about it at headquarters in case he was dismissed for carelessness. Such things are not at all uncommon in Bengal. They did not think for a minute that there were any *sahibs* about, and were probably greatly surprised when they saw Carlyon and myself walk into the office. It was too late then to rectify things, as the money was on its way to the bazaar."

Shortly after this I received a confidential letter of thanks for my services and a crisp new note for Rs. 500, which proved very acceptable. Later I took in hand several other inquiries for the authorities. It must be confessed, however, that chance alone caused me to notice that loose coin in the corner of the bag on the *Serge*, which, in turn, suggested the solution of what previously appeared a most baffling problem.

THE MAN WHO FELL SIX MILES

by

David Masters

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

The short history of aviation contains some remarkable stories, but the most amazing experience of all is that of Major R. W. Schroeder, "the man who fell six miles." "The facts of this miraculous escape," writes the Author, "are set forth in the official records of the U.S. Air Service, and by the courtesy of the U.S. Army authorities I am now privileged to tell the story for the first time and to reproduce photographs of Major Schroeder and his machine."

FOR a man to fall three miles in an unconscious state and live to tell the tale is a miracle that does not occur every day, and the average man would be inclined to say that such a thing could never happen again. But for the same man to fall *six* miles a few days later and still survive is unique—so unique that it is taxing the credulity of the reader rather high to ask him to believe it. Nevertheless it happened.

There has never been anything before in the whole history of mankind to compare with this last astounding fall of Major Schroeder, especially when it is realized how many thousands of people have been killed just by falling a few feet!

Major Schroeder is one of the finest pilots in the United States, a man absolutely without fear. Show him anything with wings and an engine, and if it is humanly possible to make it fly, you may be sure that Major Schroeder will accomplish the feat.

At the age of fifteen Schroeder had a fancy for becoming a motor expert, so he went into the automobile business and began to learn all he could. Just then Orville and Wilbur Wright started to take an interest in flying. When, in 1903, the Wrights actually flew with a power-driven aeroplane, young Schroeder was greatly impressed. A few years later he was building gliders for himself; the call of the air was too strong for him to withstand. The flying fever got into his blood. He was twenty-five when he first learned to fly in a Farman machine. Later he wandered round, gaining invaluable air experience, and when America came into the War he at once joined the United States Air Service. He was as keen as mustard, with a knowledge of aircraft and engines that was priceless.

Major R. W. Schroeder.

The authorities were not long in detecting his brilliant qualities, and they gave him one of the most difficult jobs in the whole Force, that of Chief Test Pilot. Major Schroeder gloried in the work. He took all sorts and conditions of untried machines into the air and put them through their paces. He told the authorities what was good and what was bad, the things that were wrong with them and the points in their favour. Every time he took up a new machine he risked his life, but the danger seemed to sit lightly on his shoulders.

Three years of this strenuous work in no way affected his nerve. In January, 1920, he set out on an altitude test with a passenger, and his machine climbed so well that he

managed to make a world's record. Early the next month, on February 6th, he walked out into the aerodrome at Dayton, Ohio, and went carefully over his machine—a Le Pere biplane—to see that all was in order. He was bent on capturing another world's record. The plane was equipped with a "supercharger" for compressing air for the engine at high altitudes, and supplies of oxygen were also carried to make breathing easy for the pilot, the oxygen being administered automatically. Schroeder was dressed in warm woollens and a leather suit heated by electricity, so that he would not feel the effects of the cold. The pilot had everything that science could devise to help him in his flight, and thus equipped, he stepped aboard, tested the controls once more, saw that all his instruments were working properly and the engine running sweetly, and then got away.

He put the machine up at a steep angle and she climbed away into the heavens, the engine roaring with a rhythm that told of perfect tuning. In a little while he was two miles high, and still climbing fast. At twenty thousand feet his rate of climb lessened somewhat, but still the machine pushed upward, and the earth dropped still farther away until it was five miles below him. Presently he touched thirty thousand feet, and had just passed the six-mile mark when something happened. He found it almost impossible to breathe.

"The oxygen!" he thought.

The life-giving oxygen had stopped!

Instantly Schroeder began to fight against losing consciousness. He knew that the only thing to do was to get down, and that quickly. Everything around him grew dark and misty. He fumbled for the controls, he—who knew the cockpit of the aeroplane better than the lines of his own face—groped like a blind man for the levers.

Desperately his clogging brain flogged his hands and body to a last effort, and as his senses slipped away he pulled back the "stick" and put the machine into a spin, rather than into a straight dive.

So the unconscious man and the machine fell down, down, down. One, two, three miles it fell, and slowly the difference in the air pressure made itself felt. The oxygen, from lack of which he had fainted, stole into his lungs again, and at last he opened his eyes and stared dazedly through his goggles.

He was then three miles above the earth. All the engine controls were wide open, but the engine had stopped dead. He did not remember switching it off, but apparently he had done so in that last mad fumble round as his senses left him.

Drawing a deep breath or two to expand his lungs, Schroeder switched on the engine once more and a little later was making a safe landing in McCook Field.

Then, quite calmly, the man who had just fallen in an unconscious state for three miles pulled out the switches that heated his clothes and clambered from his machine. A little later the aerodrome was buzzing with the news of his astounding experience and his still more astounding recovery. Schroeder's luck was on everybody's lips that day and for weeks after.

Such an escape would have been enough for most men; they would have been content thenceforth to watch other fellows go up while they busied themselves on the ground. But Major Schroeder was of different mettle. His luck was more than equalled by his courage, and he was firmly convinced that it was possible to fly to a height of forty thousand feet.

This was the summit of his ambition; if he could attain this altitude in his machine, he told himself, he would be content. Again and again he went over the details of his last experience to see how he could profit by it. The "supercharger" worked excellently, compressing the air in the high altitudes to the pressure of that at ground level and giving the engine a perfect mixture. The engine was a 400 horse-power Liberty, and, given enough petrol and the "supercharger," it would apparently have gone on climbing for ever. It was not the engine or the machine that had failed. It was the man—and he had failed for lack of oxygen.

"*That* sha'n't happen next time," said Schroeder, and he decided to carry two separate supplies of oxygen, one tank connected up with the automatic regulator he had carried before, and an emergency bottle, connected by a rubber tube to the pilot's mouth, with a little stop-cock to regulate the flow.

Less than a fortnight after he had fallen three miles, the Major had made his plans for another attempt at attaining the coveted forty thousand feet. On February 26th, the Le Pere biplane was taken out of its hangar into the centre of the aerodrome. Every part of it was gone over most carefully, every little "gadget" tested to see that it was in perfect working order. The engine was tried and tried again.

Finally Major Schroeder got into the machine. The engine roared out in a final test, and then was throttled down until it just ticked over. The pilot took a last look round, fitted his goggles firmly over his eyes, waved a hand, opened up the engine, and was presently shooting upward.

To those standing on the aerodrome, the machine seemed to be climbing almost perpendicularly as it rose into the sky. The onlookers had little doubt that if it was possible to get to forty thousand feet, Major Schroeder would do it.

Meanwhile the pilot settled himself comfortably in his seat, smiling with satisfaction as he watched the earth falling away below him. He kept the plane at the steepest

possible climbing angle and waited patiently while it soared steadily heavenward.

His eye roved from time to time over the instrument board, noting pressures of petrol and oil and the revolutions of the propeller. His mind had but one thought—to get to forty thousand feet.

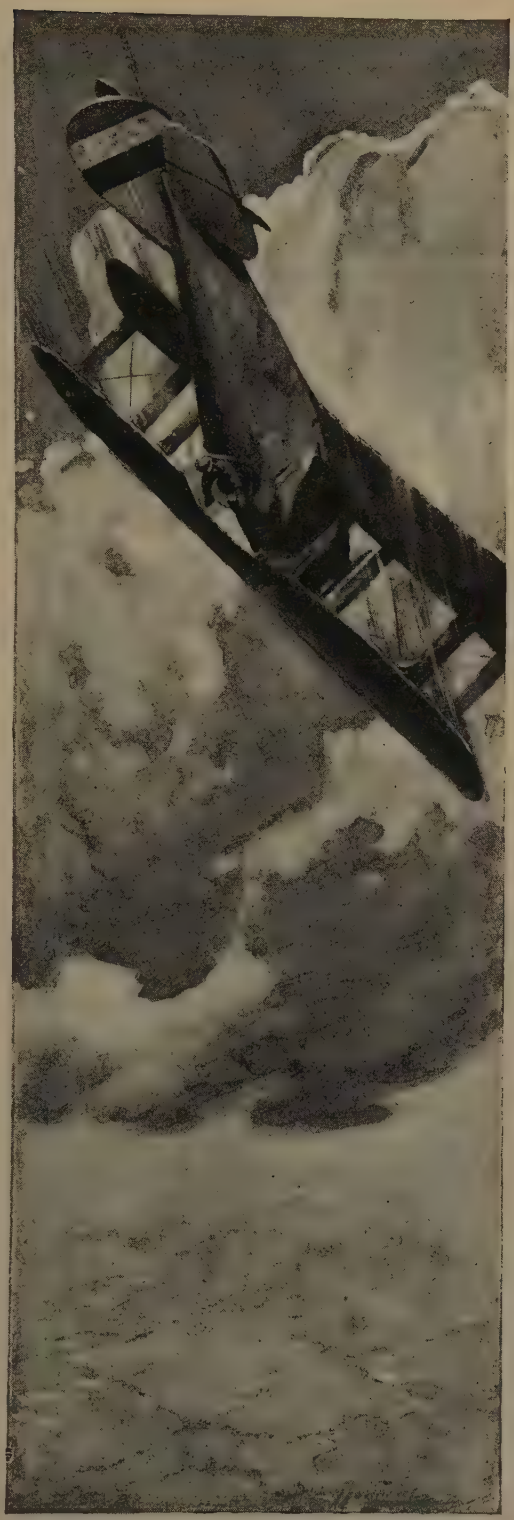
The machine climbed marvellously. In less than an hour he attained his half-way mark and the earth was twenty thousand feet below.

"Good going!" he thought.

Presently Schroeder glanced at the thermometer and saw that it was well below freezing point. His electrically-heated clothing, however, protected him from the cold and made him feel quite warm and comfortable, though his exposed cheeks told him that there was a nip in the air.

The machine continued to roar upward, and every minute the air became rarer and the temperature fell lower. But the rarefied air affected neither man nor machine. The man inhaled his oxygen and breathed easily, while the "supercharger" gave the engine all the air it needed.

Miles below him the earth was still receding and everything on it was getting smaller and smaller. Soon he touched the thirty thousand foot mark and the engine was still working perfectly.



"Down and down plunged man and machine."

"Only another ten thousand feet!" he thought, and began to tick off the feet in his mind as a motorist does the mile-stones along the road. He had been sitting in the cockpit of the aeroplane for over an hour and a half now, and each thousand feet took a little longer to climb.

But the engine did not falter, and the man's mind was still set resolutely on his self-appointed task. The temperature dropped lower and lower—twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty degrees below zero. The cold was intense, but Schroeder did not feel it. Doggedly he pushed the machine up to thirty-five thousand feet. He was using his emergency supply of oxygen now. Gradually he gained another thousand feet in height. It was during this last spell, he knew, that he would need his patience most.

Slowly he climbed another hundred feet. Then, suddenly, he felt queer; the oxygen had ceased to flow.

"What's wrong?" he thought.

He fumbled for the stop-cock to make sure that it was wide open. He could not see very well, for a solid sheet of ice over his goggles, inside and out, obstructed his vision. Already he was fighting for breath; his whole body was calling for the life-saving oxygen.

"I wonder if the stop-cock *is* wide open?" he asked

Official Photo] [*U.S. Army Air Service.*

Major Schroeder's machine in the air.

himself—and unthinkingly lifted his goggles to see.

Instantly a most appalling explosion took place inside his head. It seemed to him that his skull had burst, and everything went black. For the life of him he could not think what had happened. He tried to open his eyes, but to his horror, found it impossible.

What had actually happened was this: the temperature had dropped to sixty-seven degrees below zero, and directly Schroeder lifted his goggles, his eyes, suddenly coming into contact with the cold air, *froze solid!*

Blind and dazed, the unfortunate airman could no longer control the plane. There came a tremendous rush of air and the wind began to screech past as he drifted into unconsciousness.

Down and down plunged man and machine. One petrol tank slowly collapsed, owing to the sudden change in the pressure of the air; then another tank was smashed in; and another, the rarefied air inside them being unable to withstand the rapidly increasing pressure outside.

Sometimes in that awful fall the machine was upside down; at other times it was right side up. Mile after mile it plunged downwards with its unconscious pilot. In less than three minutes he fell six miles!

Schroeder was only two thousand feet from the earth—barely ten seconds from death—when his numbed brain cleared. Yet those few seconds were sufficient to enable the gallant man to save his life.

He pulled hard on the "stick," knowing that he must straighten out the machine to land. A momentary glimpse of the aerodrome came to his tortured eyes—just as though he had peeped for an instant through a crack in a black cloud.

The pain in his eyes was agonizing, but the courage of the man conquered.

His brain worked like lightning.

"I can't land there," he thought. "I'm blind. I must climb again to a good height and then jump for it in my parachute. I can do that with my eyes closed."

He did not feel at all afraid. He tilted the machine to climb again, and once more his eyes functioned for a fraction of a second. He seemed to see McCook's Field flick away into darkness, and remembered no more.

The men in McCook's Field saw the machine land as lightly as a bird and stop. They raced up to it. At first glance they thought the pilot was dead. His eyes and lids were frozen solid and his body was rigid.

Gently they lifted him out and took him to hospital, where he soon recovered from his adventure.

When they came to examine the machine they found that mercury which had been lying on the floor of the machine was splattered against the underside of the instrument board—proof positive that the plane had fallen part of the way upside down. So terrific was the upward rush of air during the fall that the fricton actually took the "dope" and varnish off the wings in streaks—stripped it as clean as if it had been rubbed off with sandpaper.

Certainly Major Schroeder is one of the luckiest as well as one of the pluckiest men in the world. He is the only human being who has ever fallen six miles and survived the ordeal.

To-day he is practising as an aviation engineer in Chicago.

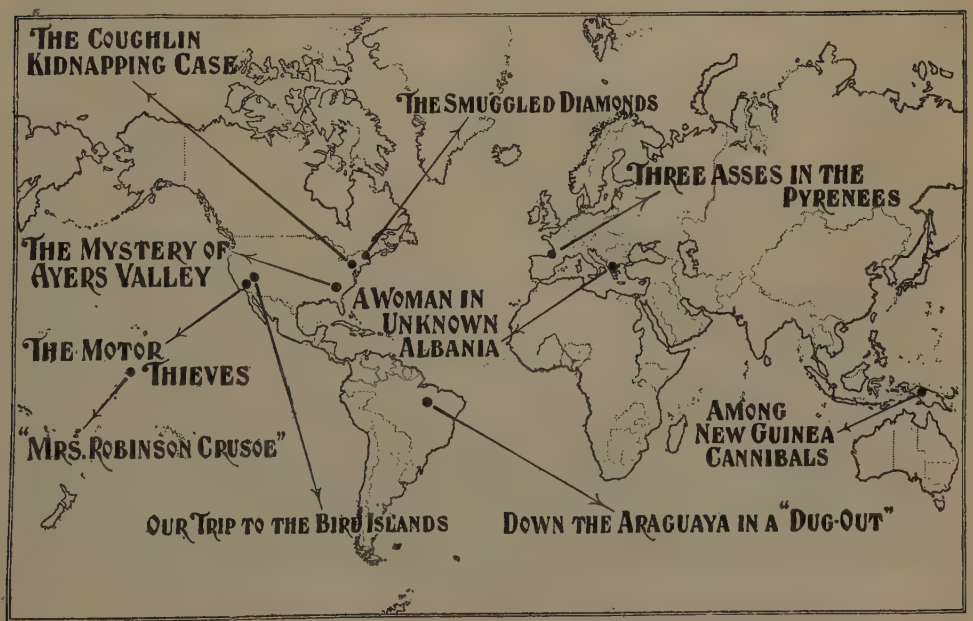
THANKS!

I SHOULD like to tender my grateful thanks to the scores of readers in all parts of the world who have been kind enough to congratulate us upon our 25th Birthday Number. It is indeed gratifying to discover what a high place the magazine occupies in the affections of its supporters.

In this issue we invite your special attention to "The Mystery of Ayers Valley," "Our Trip to the Bird Islands," and "Among New Guinea Cannibals" — three typical WIDE WORLD narratives of outstanding interest.

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
Reading the WIDE WORLD with joy,
He stuck in his thumb and spotted a plum—
"'Tis MAN AND HIS NEEDS!" cried the boy.

The Editor


THE COUGHLIN KIDNAPPING CASE
THE SMUGGLED DIAMONDS
THREE ASSES IN THE PYRENEES
THE MYSTERY OF AYERS VALLEY
A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA
THE MOTOR THIEVES
"MRS. ROBINSON CRUSOE"
AMONG NEW GUINEA CANNIBALS
OUR TRIP TO THE BIRD ISLANDS
DOWN THE ARAGUAYA IN A "DUG-OUT"

The remarkable contents-map of "The Wide World Magazine," showing the locality of every article and story in this splendid number.

"THE HUGE DOG RELAXED AND SANK TO THE GROUND."

(SEE PAGE 180.)

The Mystery of Ayers Valley

TOLD BY
DOROTHY BELLE AYERS
AND SET DOWN BY

WALTER G PATTERSON

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY L. WOOD

A girl's strange story of an unexpected inheritance from a mysterious uncle, who lived a hermit life at a remote mountain farm. Arriving to claim the property, Miss Ayers discovered that there was a tragic secret attached to her legacy, and before long found herself in deadly peril.*

I HAD just passed my twenty-first birthday when I received a letter from an attorney in a small town in the mountainous district of Western Tennessee, on the edge of North Carolina, announcing that an uncle of mine, whom I had never seen and but rarely heard mentioned, had died and left me "all his property." The lawyer requested that I would communicate with him immediately, when further particulars would be furnished.

To say that I was surprised by the news of my inheritance expresses but feebly the emotions that swept over me when I read the letter. "Uncle Tom" had never been anything but a name to me. All I knew was that he had been an old bachelor, who had "gone South" as a young man, after which time none of his relatives in western New York—the family home—had ever had tidings of him.

That he should have prospered sufficiently to leave an estate was not at all in accordance with the family traditions of him as a boy, for he had been reckoned a shiftless ne'er-do-well. That he should have selected *me* as the beneficiary of his wealth—a young girl barely out of her 'teens, of whose very existence I did not know he had ever heard—I could not understand.

Elated, nevertheless, by the news that I was an heiress, I lost no time in replying to the attorney's letter, giving him certain information which he had asked for in order to establish my identity.

Miss Dorothy Belle Ayers, who tells this remarkable story.

In due course I had a second letter from the lawyer, stating that Thomas Bartley Ayers, late of the small mountain settlement known as Ayers Valley, had left a will bequeathing me a farm of approximately five hundred acres, heavily timbered with hardwood and in part tillable, the exact value of the property being difficult to arrive at until a careful appraisement had been made. He recommended that I should come to Tennessee at the earliest possible moment, in order that the will might be probated without unnecessary delay, and other legal requirements complied with to put me in full possession of my inheritance.

When I announced that I should start the following week for the Tennessee town, in compliance with the lawyer's recommendation, I met with immediate opposition from my parents, especially as circumstances rendered it necessary for me to make the trip alone.

I was, however, a very self-willed miss, and I had long wanted to get away from the rather humdrum life of the small town where I lived and see something of the big world outside.

Furthermore, I was enraptured with the idea of being an heiress; it simplified the problem of my independence very materially. To cut a long story short, I drew the two hundred dollars I had managed to save from my salary as a school-teacher,

* The Author writes: "Miss Ayers comes from one of the best families in Livingston County, New York, and bears a reputation for unimpeachable veracity. The story is told exactly as related by her."

and, filled with dreams of a rosy future, I started for Tennessee on the tenth day after the receipt of the letter from the lawyer.

I travelled alone, confident of my ability to take care of myself in any situation that might arise.

I had carefully studied the railroad guides during the preceding week, and at Buffalo I bought a ticket for a small station in South-Eastern Tennessee, where I learnt that I should have to leave the train and continue the journey to my destination in the Blue Ridge Mountains by road.

I reached the place where I was to leave the railroad soon after noon of the second day, much fatigued from the long, hot ride in the slow-moving train.

An old, grey-headed darky, bent with rheumatism and a life of toil, came toward me as I stepped from the train, and with a ceremonious, old-fashioned bow and a grin on his black face took the suit-case from my hand and announced that "Marse Henry" —Henry Duvall was the attorney's name— "had done sent him" to fetch me to Barcomb, the little place I had received the letter from. Then he led the way to a remarkable two-seated wagon, to which was attached a grotesque old mule, and motioned me, with another bow, to the rear seat.

"Uncle Mose," which he said was the name he was "mos' gen'ly knowed by," proved to be a garrulous old fellow, and I plied him with questions during the twelve-mile ride to Barcomb.

I learned that Barcomb boasted a population of about forty white folks and perhaps a hundred "niggahs," that it was situated in the foot-hills of the big mountains, and that the white folks were "mos'ly a triflin' lot, who nevah done nothin' but set aroun' smokin' cob pipes an' drinkin' 'moonshine' whisky an' orderin' de black folks to do dey-alls work foh dem." I learned, moreover, that Lawyer Duvall was an elderly man, very well spoken of, and that he lived with his wife and daughter in the old Selby mansion, the finest place in Barcomb.

But when I came to make inquiries about my recently-deceased uncle, the old negro shut up like a clam. I came to the conclusion that there was some unpleasant mystery connected with Uncle Tom which had caused Lawyer Duvall to warn his garrulous servant not to discuss him with me. It was evidently intended that I should learn whatever I was to learn about my relative from the lawyer's own lips.

All I could get Uncle Mose to say was that "Marse Tom Ayers" had lived in a log-cabin back in the woods on his tract in the mountains, in a locality known as "Ayers Valley." He told me, also, that "Ayers Valley" was thirty miles from Barcomb, "ovah de wuss road dis side ob Kingdom Come."

This was not cheering news, but it did not dismay me.

I was young and healthy and had never had a day's illness in my life. The property I had inherited must be of considerable value, I told myself cheerfully, or else Lawyer Duvall would not have encouraged me to make the trip to Tennessee to take possession of it. If my uncle could live in the place, *I* could, with a woman to help me; and surely I could get plenty of negroes to do the farm-work? As for the mystery about Uncle Tom, I didn't propose to let that worry me. The mystery didn't affect *me*, and poor old Uncle Tom was dead.

These reflections cheered me so much that I sat back comfortably in my seat behind the slow-plodding mule and built rosy-coloured castles in the air as to the future. I would work hard, manage my farm in a business-like manner, and acquire great wealth; then I would drive back to my old home in Lakeville in my own car and show my parents and friends there how mistaken they had been in prophesying that I was a foolhardy girl who would inevitably come to grief.

Arriving in Barcomb in the mule's own good time, Uncle Mose drove me direct to the office of Lawyer Duvall, situated in a rather dingy-looking one-storey building. It stood near the centre of the town's single street, and a hasty glance round revealed to me a blacksmith's and a small store, on the front porch of which were congregated a number of shiftless-looking white men, two of them barefooted, and several negroes, all engaged in staring curiously at Uncle Mose's passenger, as though the arrival of a stranger were an event so rare as to be of the utmost importance. For the rest, there were perhaps a dozen houses straggling up and down both sides of the dusty, red-earth street, and, at one end of the abbreviated thoroughfare, a dilapidated church-building.

Adding the two rows of giant live-oaks, laurels, and sweet-gum trees that lined the street, modifying the fierce glare of the Southern sun, this was Barcomb, and I thanked the favouring star which had decreed that, whatever Ayers Valley was to bring me, I was not to be fated to live in Barcomb.

As I entered the open door of the office, which bore on its façade a weather-beaten wooden sign announcing that "Henry Duvall, Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law," did business within, a short, rather sparsely-built man, with snow-white hair and a remarkably pleasant face, sprang to his feet from a chair at a littered desk and hastened toward me with outstretched hands.

"Miss Dorothy Ayers?" he said, as I gave him my hand. "I am the man who induced you to visit this remote and not over-inviting part of the world, and I am glad to see that you have arrived safely."

I thanked him, and after he had drawn out a comfortable chair for me he broached the subject that he knew was of chief interest to me.

"He led the way to a remarkable two-seated wagon, to which was attached a grotesque old mule."

I shall not attempt to reproduce his soft Southern drawl, musical as it sounded to my Northern ears.

"Your uncle, Miss Dorothy," he commenced, "was very eccentric—essentially a man of mystery. He lived the life of a recluse in his cabin back on the edge of the Blue Ridges for many years, and during all that time he did not visit Barcomb, the nearest town, half-a-dozen times.

"Apart from a great ugly mastiff, appropriately named 'Beelzebub,' he lived absolutely without companionship. The dog prowled about the neighbourhood, terrifying the few 'hillites' who lived anywhere near by, and dog and master were about equally hated.

"The brute seemed to bear a charmed life; he was repeatedly shot at by the hill people—all expert riflemen—but invariably escaped.

"Personally, I think the fellows were too frightened to aim straight, for in their ignorance they came to believe that Thomas Bartley Ayers was in league with the Evil One, to whom he had sold his soul, and that he had bewitched his brute companion.

"How your uncle lived was a mystery. He was known to have money in a Chattanooga bank, but nobody knew during his lifetime where he got it. He kept a few chickens and scratched up a little plot of ground near the cabin to grow food for them—and that was all the 'farming' he ever did. Yet the land is naturally fertile and the greater part of the tract is covered with valuable hardwoods, not a stick of which, except the logs for his cabin and outbuildings, did he ever cut."

Mr. Duvall paused to consider a moment.

"I have intimated that no one ever visited your uncle," he went on presently, "but I must amend that statement. Once every month during the past ten years, as regularly as clockwork, a misshapen, dwarfish little man—a hunchback—has come in on the night train to the station below Barcomb, hired a mule there from a darky, ridden through here, and set off up the road in the direction of the Blue Ridges. He has invariably passed through Barcomb on his way back in time to catch the early morning train at the station.

"For a long time nobody knew where he went or what the mysterious trips meant. Then, one night, a couple of white men followed him cautiously on horseback and saw him turn in at the Ayers cabin.

"He was evidently expected, for the two men heard your uncle speak to him gruffly as he rode up to the cabin; they also heard the dog growling savagely and struggling to free himself from the chain with which he had apparently been secured.

"In the dim light the two watchers saw the dwarf and your uncle enter the cabin, heard the door closed and the rasp of drawn bolts. Thus shut out they returned home, and that was all that was ever known about the matter—during your uncle's lifetime."

Again Mr. Duvall paused.

"I am the only living man who knows the secret of Tom Ayers' life," he continued slowly, "and although I obtained the information in professional confidence, I think it was intended that I should tell you the story."

The lawyer stopped once more and drummed meditatively on his desk for a moment.

"Tom Ayers was shot and killed," he went on, in lowered tones. "A 'hillite' heard two shots in quick succession just at daylight one morning, and, armed with a rifle to protect himself from the dog, he ventured over close to the cabin and saw your uncle lying dead in the yard, with a bullet-wound in the centre of his forehead.

"The dog had disappeared. Either he also had been shot and wounded and had crawled off somewhere to die, or he had run away when he saw his master fall. The animal has not been seen by anyone in these parts during the four weeks that have elapsed since the shooting."

Shocked though I was to hear of the tragic death of my relative, I drew a breath of relief as I realized that I was not to have the company of the savage mastiff at the mountain farm.

"A few days after the inquest and burial of Tom Ayers," the lawyer resumed, "I received a sealed letter found in the cabin after his death, and addressed to me. It had evidently been written some time previously, and was superscribed with instructions in Ayers' crabbed handwriting that the letter should be forwarded to me in the event of his demise at any time. With the letter I received a second envelope containing the unfortunate man's last will and testament, properly drawn and witnessed several years earlier, naming yourself as sole legatee of all property both real and personal of which he should die possessed.

"I will tell you first the gist of what the letter contained. It impressed me as being somewhat in the nature of a confession, though why he should have selected me for his confidence I could not understand. Perhaps it was because I had done some little legal work for him at odd times and was practically the only man he had any acquaintance with in Barcomb.

"When your uncle was a comparatively young man, the letter related, he was a wealthy cattle-rancher in the State of Texas. This was about thirty-five years ago.

"Everything was progressing favourably for him, and he was rapidly adding to his already considerable wealth, when one day he became involved in a quarrel with the owner of the ranch adjoining his own, an Englishman named Webb, over the boundary between their two properties. In the heat of passion Ayers fired at him and killed him.

"I am convinced from your uncle's statement that he shot Webb in self-defence; if he hadn't done so the indications are that he would probably have been killed himself. It was manslaughter pure and simple, not a premeditated assassination, and no Northern jury would have convicted him of anything else—if, in fact, they convicted him at all.

"But Webb was very popular in that region, owner of an immense ranch, a man of great political influence, and an Englishman, of a nationality well liked in the South; whereas Tom Ayers was a Northern Yankee; and at that time, not so many years after the Civil War, Yankees were not liked at all.

"Your uncle was a taciturn, morose sort of man, Miss Dorothy, slow to make friends, and he possessed no intimates. He realized from all these circumstances that he would never get a fair trial in the county where the shooting had occurred, and that he would unquestionably be convicted of first-degree murder, in spite of any evidence that might be presented to the jury on his behalf. Although there had been no witness of the shooting—so far as he knew—and he had not as yet been accused of the slaying of Webb, it was known in the neighbourhood that he and the Englishman were at loggerheads over the boundary dispute.

"He therefore decided on a course which, in my opinion, was the only logical one he could have resorted to. Putting his real property in the hands of a responsible attorney for sale, and drawing his money from the local bank, he fled to Mexico.

"He remained there a couple of years without being disturbed and then, reading in a Texas paper that a large reward had been offered for his apprehension as a fugitive from justice, he fled again—this time to Bluefields, Nicaragua, on the eastern coast of Central America.

"There he remained almost three years, still without detection, when, his health being very poor in the hot, fever-laden Republic, he suddenly decided to return to the States, and took a boat to Savannah, whence he finally gravitated to this section, bought the tract up in the mountains where

he has since lived, and became a hermit, shutting himself off as far as possible from intercourse with his fellows.

"Meanwhile the Texas ranch had been sold for him by the attorney and the proceeds quietly placed to his credit in a bank in Mexico City, where he was at the time. When he came North he placed a large sum in a bank in Chattanooga. It was upwards of seventy-five thousand dollars.

"He brought the big brute of a mastiff with him all the way from Central America, stoutly muzzled and in leash. Judged by appearances they seemed to the people of Barcomb to be a well-matched pair.

"Ayers had been at the mountain farm well on towards twenty years, living his self-chosen hermit life, and had long since decided that his hiding-place would never be discovered by the Texas officials or other persons anxious to earn the big reward, when one night the dwarf suddenly appeared at his cabin.

"I will read to you what your uncle wrote about the hunchback in his letter."

Mr. Duvall went to his safe and brought out some papers fastened together with pink tape. Reseating himself by my side he untied the documents, spread them out on his desk, and finally selected certain pages.

"I recognized the hunchback directly his mule stopped at the door of my cabin," the lawyer read, "although I had not seen him for many years. First seizing the dog, who had promptly sprung at the visitor, and chaining him to a post, I told the fellow to dismount and come inside.

"Without waiting for him to speak I knew he had come in connection with the Texas trouble, though in what capacity I did not know.

"He had been the private secretary of the Englishman Webb. His name was Leo Grayson, and I had always despised him because of his tricky nature.

"I realized that my long immunity from detection and disgrace was at an end.

"For several minutes after I had lighted the candles and stirred the logs in the fire-place he sat huddled up in a high-backed rocking-chair, his crooked little body and weazened face giving him the appearance of a particularly diabolical gargoyle, and stared at me with an insolent grin on his face.

"I did not speak, but waited for him to do so.

"Finally he told me with an air of triumph that he had been after me for several years, hoping to earn the ten thousand dollar reward offered for my apprehension. This had never been withdrawn and would be very useful to him. He had traced me to Mexico and then to Central America, but the tracing had necessarily been very slow work.

"While in Bluefields he had discovered my flight to the States through a sailor who had been on the boat with me, and learnt that I had disembarked at Savannah. From that port tracing me had been comparatively easy, and he had finally located my hiding-place without further difficulty.

"The insolent grin was still on his face when he finished the sneering recital. This, and the thought of the dogged manner in which he had pursued me, actuated solely by a greedy desire to earn the price set on my head, infuriated me beyond restraint. I seized the poker from the fire-place and sprang toward him.

"He did not move, but looked me coolly in the eyes.

"'Steady, Tom Ayers!' he said, in a perfectly unruffled voice. 'Don't think I have been so foolish as to come to this lonely spot on the mission that has brought me here without making ample provision for my safety. Should I fail to be in Chattanooga by two o'clock to-morrow afternoon, the police of that town will send a man to find out what has happened to me. They know that I came to this cabin to find you and that I intend to be back at the station in time to catch the early morning train. Hadn't you better sit down and talk the matter over sensibly?'

"I sank weakly into my chair, threw the poker back to the fire-place, and stared at the scoundrel. I realized that I was completely at his mercy.

"Finally I summoned up sufficient resolution to ask Grayson what it was he had to say to me.

"He stated that while his original plan only involved running me down and securing the ten thousand dollar reward, I had led him such a long chase that it had cost him almost that sum. He said he now had another plan—one whereby the reward money would never be claimed and which ought to prove more satisfactory to both of us.

"If I agreed to this plan and kept the agreement strictly he said that I never need fear being brought to account for the Texas occurrence. If I failed to keep it, however, he would give me up to justice immediately.

"I had an idea what the dwarf had in mind before he explained it to me. He knew that I had received a large sum of money from the sale of my Texas property, and he believed from what he knew of my habits that I had spent very little of it. He was confident that I had the greater part of this money left, and he figured that by holding a threat of exposure over my head he could make me pay him considerably more than the ten thousand dollars.

"I felt sure it was blackmail he had in view, and my surmise proved correct.

"I need not prolong the story. Fearing the disgrace of being taken back to my old home in Texas as a prisoner, probably in handcuffs, quite as keenly as I did the possible verdict of a Texas jury, I yielded to the dwarf's demands. I had a considerable sum of money in the bank at Chattanooga and a larger sum invested in stocks and bonds. I gave him my cheque for fifteen thousand dollars there and then, and regularly each month from then until now I have paid him one thousand dollars to keep quiet. In all I have let him bleed me of nearly a hundred thousand dollars. I have turned the stocks and bonds into cash and paid the proceeds over to him, and now I have only a few thousands left in the bank. I expect trouble with him when I can no longer meet his extortionate demands. If sudden disaster overtakes me, or if anything happens to me, the dwarf will be the author of it."

The lawyer looked up from his reading.

"Except for a few brief instructions concerning the will," he said, "the letter ends abruptly at that point. I have taken steps to have the dwarf, Grayson, apprehended, but thus far he has not been caught. He did not return to Texas; this much we have discovered.

"And now, Miss Dorothy, my wife and daughter join me in inviting you to our home as a guest. To-morrow we will go into the matter of the will, and during the day we will drive out to Ayers Valley, and you can see what you think of your new possession. No more business talk to-day!"

My uncle's letter had depressed me, but nevertheless I looked forward to the visit to the mountain farm with the greatest interest. I longed to hasten the preliminaries that should usher me into my new life as a landed proprietor. I had no fears for the future; but had I known what awaited me I should have shrunk from Ayers Valley in horror!

Mr. and Mrs. Duvall threw up their hands in protest when they found that I intended to make the mountain farm my home and work the property with negro help.

They told me of the unspeakably lonesome life I should lead in the remote cabin with the companionship of no one but a black woman-servant, and with the ignorant and uncouth "hillites" as my sole neighbours.

They said that the property was practically a trackless wilderness, and that no person except an experienced white farmer could ever succeed in making anything else out of it. They enlarged in graphic language upon the dangers of the locality for an inexperienced girl of twenty-one, and tried in every way they could to discourage me from what I planned.

They suggested that, instead of going to live there, I should visit the property with them, look it over thoroughly, and then put it into the hands of an agent to be leased or sold.

I knew that their advice was kindly intended and that it was good advice; but I had set my heart on running the farm myself and I was not to be dissuaded. I think I have intimated that I have an obstinate streak in me, and I had always been accustomed to having my own way.

Seeing that I was determined, my hospitable hosts offered no further objections, and after I had passed a pleasant evening and enjoyed a dreamless sleep in their beautiful Colonial home, the negro groom, after breakfast next morning, brought round the old-fashioned but comfortable family carriage drawn by a span of handsome dappled mules, and we set forth on the thirty-mile drive to Ayers Valley. Automobiles were more or less unknown at the time in Barcomb and other back-country towns in the South.

After a delightful drive, lasting about five hours, the greater part of the way climbing steep hills or mere mountain trails, we came at last to our destination. As we drove in at an opening in what had once been a rail fence, but was now in a sad state of repair, and I caught sight of the cabin which I purposed making my future home, I must admit that my heart sank.

It stood in a small cleared space surrounded at a little distance by a circle of mammoth live-oaks, which towered above it like an array of threatening, stalwart giants, adding to its appearance of gloom.

It had evidently been visited by the children of the "hillites" since the death of its whilom owner, and they had revenged themselves upon the feared and detested recluse by smashing every pane of glass in its four windows, while the yard was littered with broken furniture and battered kitchen utensils.

"Your prospective happy home!" said Mr. Duvall, with a quizzical smile, as he noted the dismayed look on my face.

We entered the dilapidated old cabin through the front door, which stood open, hanging on one hinge. The interior was in keeping with the exterior. Such of my uncle's possessions as were not littering the ground outside were scattered over the floors inside. His trunks had been broken open and their contents strewn around; even the kitchen stove had been tipped over and the ashes lay about in little heaps.

I gazed around me in dismay, looked into the two small rooms at one side, visited the small detached building in the rear, which Mrs. Duvall said I should use as a kitchen, in Southern style, and was then conducted about the grounds so that I might get an idea of what a mountain forest looked like. Mr. Duval told me the names of the trees with which I was not familiar, assuring me that in the great walnuts alone I had a large fortune—"if there were only some inexpensive way to get the logs to the railroad, forty miles distant." Soon after we started back to Barcomb.

The following morning the Duvalls drove with me to Johnson City, where the necessary legal matters were attended to, putting me in possession of my inheritance. This included nearly four thousand dollars in money in the Chattanooga bank, which became subject to my cheque. With this sum at my command I did not hesitate to purchase such furniture as I thought I should need, and arrange for its delivery at the cabin. Pending its arrival and the making habitable of the cabin, I was glad to accept an invitation to remain as a guest at the Duvall home.

Ten days later, having secured the services as a general house servant of a very black and very fat "mammy," whom Uncle Mose found for me and highly recommended, together with two negro carpenters, I bade farewell to Barcomb and set out for my new

"I seized the poker from the fireplace and sprang towards him."

home in the two-seated wagon. Uncle Mose was at the helm and the black woman —her name I found to be "Aunt" Chlorinda Watson, "mos' gen'ly called 'Aunt Chloe'"—was seated beside me in the rear. I had firmly refused to permit the kind-hearted Duvalls to have any more bother with me.

We reached the cabin at four in the afternoon, found that the new furniture had been taken from the packing-cases and pushed inside, and that glass had been put in the window frames and the doors repaired by the two carpenters, who had preceded us. Aunt Chloe and I at once got busy, she giving the floors a thorough sweeping and scrubbing, the like of which they had probably never had before, while I contented myself with lighter tasks.

We worked until a late hour trying to make the cabin fit to live in, and then I crept into my bed in one of the smaller rooms, tired out but happy. Aunt Chloe made herself a bed in the detached building in the rear, emphatically refusing to sleep in the house with the "quality folks," which, in the South, is regarded as little short of a social crime.

The strangeness of the surroundings prevented my sleeping well that first night. Thoughts of the tragedy that had been enacted in the cabin kept obtruding themselves on my mind and added to my restlessness; and the absolute quietness of the forest, broken only by the calls of the night-birds and the occasional near-by scream of what I took to be a cougar, were by no means conducive to a steadying of the nerves. I was tempted several times to call Aunt Chloe in from the rear building and insist upon her remaining in the house through the night. But I resolutely fought the temptation off and toward daylight fell asleep.

When the two negro carpenters returned next morning, I set them to cutting trees, from the logs of which I had decided to build a second cabin for the occupancy of Aunt Chloe which should be more comfortable and hygienic than the stuffy detached kitchen.

I soon discovered that in the coloured "mammy" I had a real treasure. She proved to be not only a splendid cook, but she was alive to the shiftless ways of the male members of her race, and did not hesitate to speak her mind to them in vigorous language when she caught them loafing at their work.

She had many a verbal set-to with the two carpenters during the next few days, keeping a supervisory eye on them until the new cabin was completed, and I have no doubt that but for her they would have dawdled along at their task for a full month.

I was kept too busy for the next three or four weeks having the fences and gates rebuilt and generally tidying up the place to have any time to feel lonesome, and when night came I was too tired to think of anything but sleep. I commissioned Uncle Mose to buy me a cow and a number of chickens, for whose accommodation I had a shed and chicken yard constructed. With Aunt Chloe to attend to the milking, while I looked after the chickens, in addition to the other work, our time was pretty fully occupied.

I made it a point from the start to make friends with my "hillite" neighbours, believing that friends, of whatever social grade, were better than enemies. I invited their puny, sickly-looking children to come into the yard when I saw them staring shyly through the line-fence at me, fed them with some of Aunt Chloe's delicious sugar cookies, and told them fairy tales that soon made them forget their shyness. After a few visits from the little ones, their mothers commenced to come with them occasionally. Then, one morning, a tall, cadaverous man with straw-coloured hair and carrying an old-fashioned "musket" over his shoulder stopped at my door and, without speaking, tossed a brace of squirrels, nicely dressed, on to the floor and slouched away.

After this the backwoodsmen and their families came often to my cabin. Their visits were the occasion of much righteous indignation on the part of Aunt Chloe, my self-appointed social arbiter as to things Southern. "Yo' ain't done got no call to 'sociate with no po' white trash, dat eben niggahs don't hab no truck with," she told me in her decisive way.

Despite this *pronunciamento*, however, a time was to come when dangers surrounded me of which I had not dreamed, and then I had reason to be very thankful I had made these friendships.

Affairs ran along without anything exciting happening until well into the month of September.

I had set the two carpenters, whom I had found to be first-rate wood-choppers, to clear another twenty-five acres of woodland, giving me about seventy-five acres in all of tillable land, including what had been cleared previously. Then I bought a span of sturdy mules from a neighbour, had a log barn and corral constructed for their accommodation, and sent the two black men to Barcomb astride the mules to purchase harness, a stout "democrat" wagon, two ploughs, and other needed farm-tools. When these purchases arrived at the Valley, I started the men to ploughing the rich black loam, and at last commenced to feel something like a real farmer.

One hot day in September Aunt Chloe and I had worked ourselves almost to exhaustion helping the men cut fodder. We sought our beds at an early hour, and almost instantly fell into deep slumber.

I did not know how long I had slept, but at some hour during the night I was awakened by a mysterious noise outside the cabin, the more noticeable, perhaps, because ordinarily the stillness of death prevailed. I sat up, listening intently, and heard someone on the front porch, moving with footsteps that seemed to drag in a peculiar manner. The intruder tried the locked screens at the windows and then rattled and pushed at the door, which I

made a practice of keeping heavily barred. Then a gruff voice mumbled curses. This was followed by the angry growl of a dog. Then, for a long spell, I heard nothing more. I had got out of bed and stood at the partly-opened door of my room, peering toward the front windows, but saw nothing unusual.

After listening intently for twenty minutes or so, with my heart thumping wildly, I felt satisfied that the visitor had gone away. Gathering my night garments about me, I made my way swiftly to the cabin of the black woman. She, too, had her door closed and barred, and the lusty snores that came through the screens convinced me that the visit of the night-prowler had not disturbed her slumbers.

I rattled on her door and called to her as loudly as I dared, and finally succeeded in arousing her. Recognizing my voice she came to the door and threw it open.

"Whatevah is de mattah, honey?" she asked anxiously. "Is yo'-all done tuk sick?"

In rapid sentences I told her of the mysterious visitor. I said that I was afraid he might return, and insisted that she should come into my cabin and pass the balance of the night on the sofa in the living-room.

Fire leaped from Aunt Chloe's eyes.

"Ah sho will," she said, as she prepared to accompany me, "an' ef any triflin' man comes snoopin' round tryin' to scare my li'l missy, he's done gwine to have *me* to settle with!"

In the larger cabin she inquired again about the dog I had heard growl, and wanted to know if I were sure about that.

I asked her indignantly if she thought I didn't know the growl of a dog when I heard it, and what there was strange about it.

She shook her head and vouchsafed only the enigmatic reply that she "was jes' a-wonderin', jes' a-wonderin', dat was all," with which mysterious words she yawned prodigiously. When I saw that she did not intend to explain further, I crept back into my bed. I could not get to sleep again; I was too nerve-shaken by the visit of the prowler, but it was soon apparent that Aunt Chloe's equanimity had not been disturbed by the incident, for she was presently snoring more loudly than ever.

A glance at the clock when I re-entered my bedroom had told me the hour was midnight.

I lay tossing about for what seemed to be hours, now straining my ears for suspicious sounds from without, now listening to the snores of Aunt Chloe.

Up to what must have been near two o'clock, the snoring was the only sound. Then, in an interlude in Aunt Chloe's performance, I suddenly heard a rattle on the front door.

Slipping quietly from my bed, I crept in my bare feet to the couch of the black woman. I gave her a vigorous shake, and, as she opened her eyes and stared sleepily into my face in the pale moonlight filtering through the screens, I clapped my hand across her mouth to prevent an outcry, pointed toward the door, and in a whisper asked her if she could hear it being shaken.

Then suddenly a dog growled, and directly afterwards we could hear it running up and down the porch.

Aunt Chloe sprang from the couch as if she were suddenly electrified and, rushing to the door, threw it open. Quick as she was, however, the door-rattler was quicker.

In the faint light we saw an object—it scarcely resembled a human being—running away from the cabin, dragging a monstrous dog with him by the collar.

The man—as I decided it must be—appeared to be scarcely taller than the dog he led; his shoulders humped forward in a peculiar manner, giving him a grotesque, animal appearance; his head was of abnormal size and was covered with a great shock of black hair which streamed down his shoulders. Add to this that one of his legs seemed to be partially paralyzed, and you will have a picture of the strange creature we caught a hurried glimpse of. He was running with almost incredible swiftness, despite his deformities, and was in plain view for an instant along a moonlit path.

Aunt Chloe gave a startled gasp and would have dashed after the strange pair had I not seized her arm.

"It's dat pernickety dwarf what done kill yo' uncle, Missy!" she exclaimed, with blazing eyes. "An dat's dat debbil-dog what yo' uncle used to call 'Belzebub.' Ah jes' wish Ah could get mah five fingahs on dat humpy-back's windpipe. He wouldn't nevah kill nobody else!"

She begged me to let her pursue the creature, but I was in no mood at the moment to be left alone; besides, I was sure the great savage mastiff would tear her in pieces if she attacked its master, as the dwarf appeared to be.

"Ah done s'picioned it was dat ornery dwahf come back, soon as evah yo' mention de dawg," commented Aunt Chloe. "Dey bof disappeahed dat same night an' ain't nevah been seen sence, an' Ah sho' is a wonderin' what dey comes back foh."

I was uneasily curious on the point myself.

We saw nothing more of the pair that night. In fact, we saw nothing of them for over a week, and I began to hope that whatever mission my uncle's slayer had come on, he and his brute companion would not return. It was a hope, however, that was not to be realized.

The ninth day after the disturbing visit, a Saturday, Aunt Chloe had asked permission to take the mules and wagon for a trip to see her relatives, a few miles from Barcomb. She was not to return until late

on Sunday afternoon, and I was left in the cabin alone. The nine days that had elapsed since the dwarf's appearance had removed any fear of his reappearance from my mind; and even though he should pay me another call, I consoled myself with the reflection that the two coloured men were close at hand in their lean-to, whence I could easily summon them.

On Sunday evening Aunt Chloe had not returned up to eight o'clock, though I was expecting her every moment. I sat near a front window doing some mending, with a bright lamp beside me.

I heard no sound, but suddenly something prompted me to glance toward the window.

A face—the sort of horrible countenance one sees in nightmares—was pressed against the pane, staring directly into my startled eyes with a look of malignant hatred that made me spring to my feet in terror!

I tried to scream, but no sound came from my throat.

As I shrank back, with my hand pressed to my heart, the face abruptly disappeared, and an instant later the door, which I had not fastened, was pushed open and the hideous dwarf rushed into the room.

He came close to where I had sunk down into a chair and stood regarding me with an evil grin on his distorted lips.

I was too frightened for the moment even to think, merely realizing with a vague feeling of relief that apparently the dog was not with him.

Never had I seen—and may I never see again!—such a frightfully misshapen creature, nor such a diabolical countenance!

For what seemed to me an interminable time he continued to stare without speaking, now and then swinging his ape-like arms, which extended almost to his twisted, ill-shaped knees.

Finally he bent over until his cruel face was within a few inches of my own, and a threatening look came into his eyes.

"Who are you, here in old Ayers' cabin?" he asked, in a shrill squeak. "Where's my money that old Ayers was keeping from me? Give it to me before I choke you!"

He reached for my throat with his great hairy paws and an insane glare leaped into his wildly protruding eyes. If ever I prayed it was then—that Aunt Chloe might return.

"Give it me!" he screamed. "Give me the money old Ayers refused me!"

His fingers closed on my throat. I felt myself choking. Again I tried to scream, but only a gurgle came to my lips. The air grew black. I gave myself up for lost—and then the rear door was thrust open and I heard Aunt Chloe shout as she bounded into the room.

By a mighty effort I kept myself from fainting. I saw the furious black woman leap upon the dwarf, seize him by his collar, and give him a shaking that made his teeth rattle. I saw her strike him on the side of the head with her ponderous paw, then lift him bodily in the air and hurl him with all her great strength to the floor, where he lay in a huddled heap.

"Yo' mis'ble li'l debbil!" she shouted, standing belligerently over the prostrate dwarf and threatening him again with her fists. "Ah has a good notion to kill yo' whah yo' lays!"

She continued to stand over the half-conscious creature until she saw that the fight had gone out of him; then she turned to me and told me to take the dinner-horn out on the porch and blow it as loudly as I could to fetch the two black men to the cabin.

I had now quite recovered from the shock I had received and, seizing the horn, I hastened to obey her.

I did not, however, have time to put the horn to my lips. As I passed out to the porch the mastiff came bounding towards me from the shadows and with slathering jaws leaped at my throat!

Almost at the same instant a shot rang out and the huge dog relaxed and sank to the ground quivering, all danger from him for ever past. A neighbouring "hillite" came rushing toward the cabin from the direction of the fence with a smoking rifle in his hand. Fortunately for me he had been passing and had seen the great dog attack me.

That is practically my entire story.

The dwarf, having been securely bound, was conveyed to the Barcomb jail that same night, Aunt Chloe accompanying the black man who drove the team to make sure that the prisoner did not escape. Later she received, through Lawyer Duvall, the five hundred dollars reward that had been offered for the murderous rascal's apprehension.

Three days afterwards I took train at Barcomb for my Northern home. I had had my fill of life in the mountains!

I turned over the cabin, with its furniture and stock, to Aunt Chloe, and rewarded the "hillite," who had saved me from death, by making him a present of the growing crops.

A year later Mr. Duvall succeeded in selling the property to a large lumber syndicate for a round sum, the new owners proposing the construction of flumes to convey the cut logs to the valley bottom, three miles below.

The dwarf was duly tried, and convicted of the crime of murder, but, being found insane, was sent to an asylum for criminal lunatics.

It came out at the trial that he had fallen and broken his leg while escaping from the cabin after slaying my uncle, and that he had been obliged to drag himself with great suffering over the mountain-top to an abandoned

"I saw her lift him bodily in the air and hurl him to the floor."

hut on the North Carolina slope of the "Ridges," where he had lived ever since.

Where he got the dog was not discovered, but the brute had probably followed him because it recognized in him a congenial mate.

THE SMUGGLED DIAMONDS

by

Charles Spencer

ILLUSTRATED BY H.M.BROCK

The narrator was for many years in the service of the Brazilian Government, and here relates how he solved a perplexing mystery and at the same time won a bride. He vouches absolutely for the truth of the story.

WHILE I was still a toddler, my father was appointed U.S. Consul at a small port in Brazil, and I grew up in that country. When a change of Government in the States brought along a new Consul, my father decided to remain in Brazil. Through his acquaintance with officials and prominent business men he had unusual opportunities for obtaining concessions and grants, made money rapidly, had hosts of friends, and was looked upon almost as a Brazilian. I mention all this merely to explain how it came about that, tiring of the routine life on the plantations, and being of a somewhat restless, dare-devil disposition, I, an American, received an appointment to a responsible position in the Brazilian revenue service. I became, as a matter of fact, a sort of Secret Service officer in connection with the diamond monopoly, for at that time the Government controlled all the precious stones found in the country.

I had been at this work for a little over a year when I received a letter from my chief summoning me to the coast. I found him very worried and anxious, for it appeared that diamonds were being systematically smuggled out of the country in large quantities and sold in the States. Despite every effort, the Brazilian officers had completely failed to discover the smugglers. Not only were they unable to find out by what means the stones were leaving the country, but—what was of even more importance—they were utterly at a loss to explain how the gems were smuggled from the diggings to the coast, or who received them at the port. Unless results were speedily forthcoming it seemed likely that my chief would soon be out of a job. As a last resort, he said, he had called upon me with the idea that, being an American, I might have a better chance of success in tracing the smuggled stones from the New York end.

It was the biggest thing I had ever undertaken, but the inducements offered were very tempting. Moreover, the game promised excitement and a visit to the States, and I jumped at the chance, especially as I was madly in love with my chief's daughter, Mercedes. If I succeeded in this mission I felt that the old man might be inclined to withdraw the objections he had hitherto made to my suit.

Once in New York I had little trouble in locating the contraband stones, and inside two months I knew all the shops where they were being sold. By closely watching these dealers and their stocks I soon learnt when a new lot of diamonds arrived, and armed with this information I at once made a careful search of the shipping news and the various docks, looking for vessels from Brazilian ports. I discovered that only three ships had arrived during the time the smuggled diamonds had come in. One was a tramp steamer, with not a man-Jack on board who spoke English except the officers. I decided they hadn't enough sense to know a diamond when they saw it, let alone smuggling them out of Brazil and into the States.

The second ship was a regular mail steamer, and I knew that she was too well watched at the other end to get any stones out of Brazil. The third and last boat was a little two-masted schooner—a coaster which had been chartered to carry lumber and bring back miscellaneous cargoes. She hailed from Bath, Maine; was named the *Amanda and Mary*, and her skipper was a

chin-whiskered, dried-up old salt who looked as if he had never possessed the price of a diamond in his life.

I *couldn't* suspect him, and I was cudgelling my brains to think of some new line when, happening to find myself in Battery Park, I seated myself on a bench. I had been sitting there for half an hour perhaps, thinking hard, when I saw my down-East skipper come rolling up the street and plump himself down on a seat a short distance away. I was just on the point of going over to talk with him — I was curious to learn what sort of a fellow he was — when I saw another man approach, nod to the skipper, and take a seat beside him.

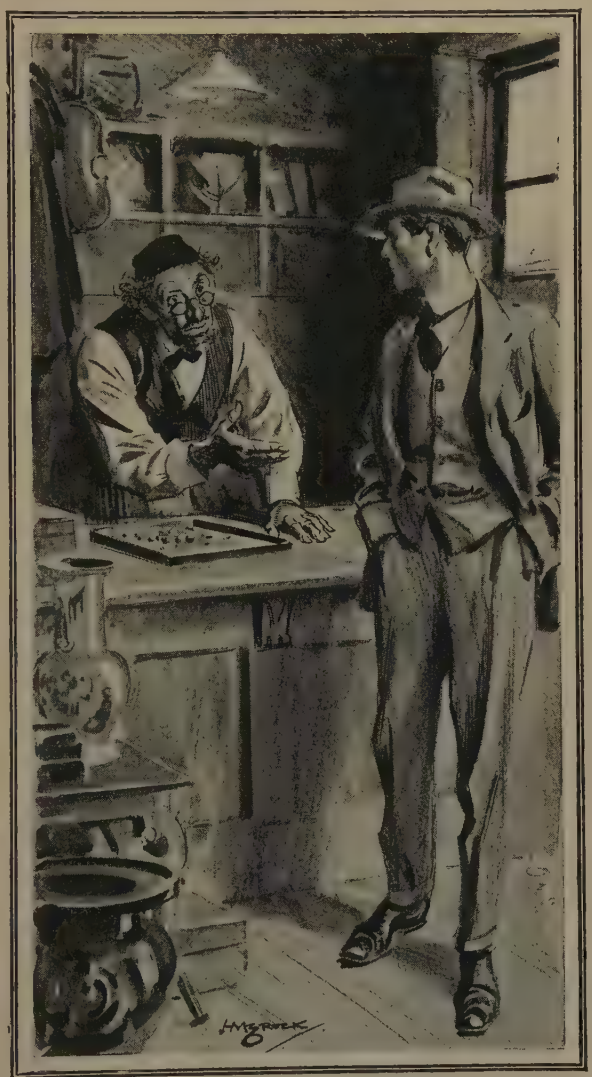
My own bench was partially hidden by a clump of shrubbery, and I could thus watch the others without being seen. The only reason why the newcomer attracted my attention was because of his appearance. He was a dark, nervous-looking man, evidently a South American — probably, I thought, a Brazilian — and this fact, linked with the arrival of the *Amanda and Mary* from Brazil coincident with the appearance of new diamonds in the city, at once made me suspicious.

After a few moments' conversation, during which neither of the men looked at the other, but kept their faces towards the street as if perfect strangers, I saw the old Yankee surreptitiously pass a little canvas bag to the South American, who, in turn, handed over a huge roll of bills to the schooner's captain. This was getting decidedly interesting, I decided, and my hopes of having by chance located the smugglers ran high. Of course, the bag might not contain diamonds at all, but I felt that the chances were ninety to one that it did, and I determined to trail the South American until he disposed of his packet.

Presently the captain rose, stretched himself, and then walked slowly away towards the docks. As soon as he was out of sight the other man started briskly up-town. Strolling along some distance in the rear, I followed until, turning into a narrow cross-street, he entered a dingy pawnbroker's. It was useless for me to attempt to learn anything by chasing him into the shop, and so, stepping into a nearby doorway, I waited until the South American reappeared. Then having allowed him plenty of time to get well away, I crossed the street and asked the skull-capped old pawnbroker to show me some diamonds. Among those he brought out were several which I knew were Brazilian stones, but all were cut and therefore of no interest to me.

"Are these all you have?" I asked. "I'm looking for something exceptionally fine."

The old Hebrew replied in the affirmative, looking at me suspiciously meanwhile over his glasses. As I turned towards the door, however, and he saw



"As I turned towards the door he changed his mind. 'Vait a bit,' he exclaimed."

that he was about to lose a sale, he changed his mind.

"Vait a bit," he exclaimed. "I haf some nod cut. Maybe dey please you. To ged them cut is not expensive, and I sell them sheep. A frendt in Holland he send them to me to sell."

As he spoke he opened his ancient safe, and, rummaging about, drew out a canvas bag which I could have sworn was that I had seen the skipper pass to the dark man in the park. Dumping the contents on a tray, the pawnbroker displayed the most beautiful assortment of uncut Brazilian stones I had seen in many a day.

It was all I needed to confirm my suspicions; and the prices at which the old man offered them were, I knew, too low for any but smuggled diamonds. Telling him that I would inquire about prices for cutting the gems and would drop in again, I left his shop and made my way to a restaurant, where I planned my next move as I ate.

Although I was morally certain that the *Amanda and Mary* was the smuggling vessel and her skipper the smuggler, I could as yet prove nothing. I must actually find the stones in his possession or aboard the schooner and within the jurisdiction of Brazil. To be sure I might take my story to the United States authorities and enlist their co-operation, but that, even if they rounded up the gang for smuggling the stones into the States, would not help me in the least, for I was not interested in stopping the diamonds from getting into New York duty-free, but in preventing them from getting out of Brazil and in arresting the smugglers in that country.

The first thing to be done was to discover if the schooner was to make another trip to Brazil and, if so, to go back at once by steamer, lay my plans before my chief, and seize the vessel just as she was preparing to sail on her voyage north if evidence could be obtained to warrant it.

With this scheme in view, I again made my way to the docks, hung around near the *Amanda and Mary* for a time, and eventually scraped up an acquaintance with a member of her crew. From him I learned that the vessel was to sail in a few days with a cargo for Brazil. Having settled this point, I had only to wait for the next steamer, on which I at once engaged a passage.

As soon as I reached Brazil, I reported my discoveries, and arrangements were made to keep a strict watch on the schooner and her crew during every moment she was in port.

Of course I had no intention of letting either captain or crew suspect that I was a member of the Government service, and it was therefore agreed that I should never be openly addressed or recognized by any of my fellow-officers, for my plan was to pose as a planter and to ingratiate myself with the skipper in order to be with him as much as possible when he was off his guard.

In due time the little schooner arrived, entered the port, and commenced to unload; but from the moment she tied up not less than three Customs men were constantly on guard, one on the schooner and two on the docks, and every move of the captain and each member of his crew was known.

At the earliest opportunity I boarded the vessel, introduced myself as an American resident of the country and a small planter, and asked about terms for shipping my products by schooner.

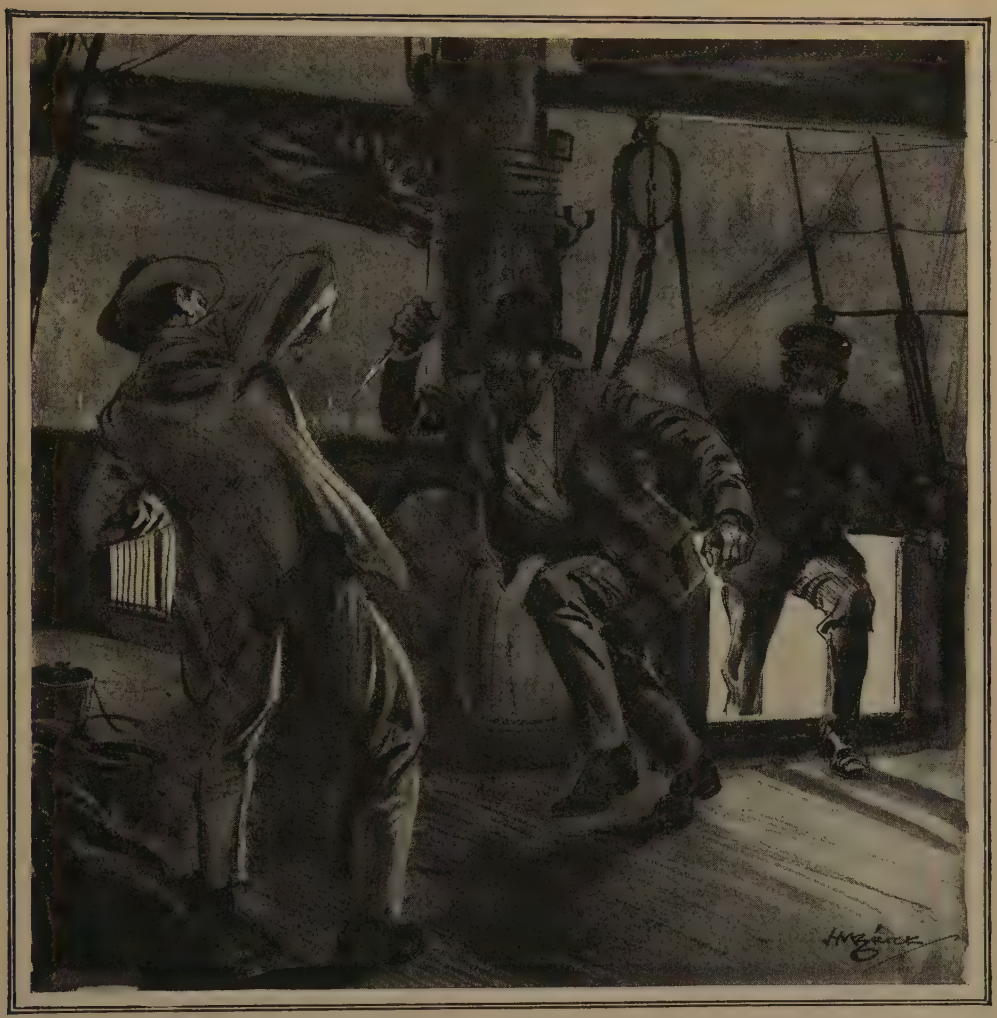
The captain was absolutely unsuspicious, gave me the information I asked, and became quite friendly, inviting me to have a drink and passing a box of excellent cigars. At his invitation I spent the rest of the day with him ashore, and I was positive that he had no opportunity to purchase or receive stones. The following morning I again called on the skipper, meeting him just as he was leaving the ship. He greeted me cordially and invited me to walk with him. As we went up the gangway he turned to a sailor seated on the deck, busily engaged in mending a sail, and remarked that he would have some more twine sent aboard on his way up-town.

A few blocks from the docks, we entered a shop kept by an old Portuguese—a sort of ship chandler's store, full of odds and ends and catering largely for sailors and shipping men. Here the skipper ordered the sail-twine and some rope to be sent to his schooner, and then we resumed our stroll. After an hour or two in the cafés and a drive into the country we returned to the schooner, where I took leave of the captain, noticing as I left the boat that the same man was still working on the sail, with the package of new twine beside him.

For five days, while the *Amanda and Mary* remained in port, the skipper and his men were dogged day and night, and not a single chance was given any one of them to secure stones without our knowledge. At the end of that time, however, nothing whatever had been accomplished. The schooner prepared to sail, and still there was not a shred of evidence on which to hold her. Nevertheless, I felt certain, in my own mind, that there were smuggled stones on board. So strong was this feeling that at the last moment I decided to sail on her, watch developments in New York and, if possible, return to Brazil on board.

With this idea in mind I saw the captain, explained that I was anxious to meet the purchasers of my cargo in person, and asked him casually if I could sail with him and also make the return passage.

He agreed readily, saying he would be glad of my company. He named a price for my passage, and that same evening I went aboard. At daylight we set sail.



"He leapt like a cat at my throat, and I saw a knife gleam in the darkness."

We reached New York safely, after a pleasant but monotonous trip, and two days later I saw the South American again.

This time I met him leaving the dock as I was returning from a trip up-town, and I noticed that he looked at me very sharply as we passed. Somehow his face appeared vaguely familiar to me, but I decided that this was due to my remembrance of the first time I had seen him with the skipper in the park, and I gave no further thought to the matter.

Next day I called on each of the diamond dealers on my list and, as I had half expected, found that a number of new Brazilian stones were on the market, while the stock of the old pawnbroker had more than doubled.

Here indeed was a mystery. I was positive that no member of the schooner's crew had taken diamonds aboard, yet here was circumstantial evidence of the strongest kind that a consignment had been brought in by the schooner. How they had been taken ashore in New York was of little importance, and comparatively easy to explain, for I could not keep an eye on everybody, and I had no doubt the South American had smuggled them ashore. Nevertheless, I watched the skipper and crew, but saw nothing suspicious. Few of the men, for that matter, left the schooner at all, as the hands were kept busy mending sails, repairing rigging, and painting, and even the captain seldom went ashore for long.

At last the vessel's cargo was discharged, the new cargo was stowed, and the skipper informed me we should sail the following day. I was on hand bright and early and then, in tow of a fussy little tug, we started down the harbour.

Before we reached the Narrows, however, I had a surprise, for at breakfast the little South American I had seen on two previous occasions appeared at table. The skipper introduced him as "Señhor Barhona," and explained that he was interested in the firm which was shipping the lumber and was going to Brazil to seek new business.

This gave me something to think about, because, if the story were true, his relations with the captain were accounted for, the bag I had seen him receive might not have contained gems, and for all I knew his visit to the pawnbroker's might have been perfectly legitimate, while the presence there of a canvas bag of uncut stones might have been merely a coincidence. Nevertheless, my suspicions were not allayed, and I told myself that even if Barhona were innocent I was still convinced that the schooner was the smuggling vessel.

Barhona made himself very pleasant. He spoke English fluently, seemed well acquainted with people in Brazil, and mentioned the names of several prominent men and firms with whom I was familiar. But somehow, all through the long voyage, I had a haunting feeling that I had known or met the fellow before in suspicious circumstances.

This time, when we reached port, in addition to the officers watching the schooner and her crew, a special man was told off to shadow Señhor Barhona.

Three days after our arrival I was standing on the schooner's deck, waiting for the skipper to accompany me ashore. It was evening, and quite dark, and I was leaning over the rail close to the mainmast, watching the phosphorescence in the water, when I heard footsteps and turned round just in time to see Barhona cross the deck and, without glancing to right or left, hurriedly enter the cabin. I was still looking in that direction, a bit puzzled over his evident haste, when a figure stepped from the shadows and I recognized Pedro, the Customs man who had been told off to watch Barhona. The next instant he was beside me and in rapid whispers reported that he had made a discovery.

"What is it?" I asked in guarded tones. "Tell me quickly, for you must not be seen here and the captain may arrive at any moment."

"The Señhor Barhona," whispered Pedro. "That is not his true name. He is Ortiz, the Venezuelan—he whom you ran down two years ago at Gurupo. Beware of him, Señhor!"

Instantly, at Pedro's words, it all came back to me. No wonder Barhona had seemed familiar; but without his heavy black beard I had been unable to place him. He was a dangerous man, an unprincipled scoundrel, and I now felt sure he was the brains and head of the diamond-smugglers.

As these thoughts rushed through my mind, footsteps sounded on the companion-way stairs. Pedro promptly melted from sight, and the next instant the captain and Barhona appeared. They were talking together earnestly, and as they neared me I heard Barhona say: "And *I* tell you he is a spy! I know him well. He has been too long with us already. To-night——"

At that moment he caught sight of me. With a short, quick oath he leapt like a cat at my throat, and I saw a knife gleam in the darkness! Instinctively I sprang backward to avoid his savage lunge, and as I did so my foot struck something on the deck and I fell heavily and rolled to one side, while my assailant, missing his stroke, fell forward on his knees, his knife burying itself harmlessly in the pile of canvas over which I had stumbled.

Before he could recover himself there was a spurt of flame from the darkness and the rascal sank to the deck groaning, as Pedro dashed forward from his hiding-place.

As I rose to my feet Pedro was covering the skipper with his still smoking revolver, while the latter, his hands aloft, was protesting vigorously that he had had no hand in the affair.

"That may be true, my friend," I remarked, as I snapped handcuffs on his wrists, "but if it hadn't been for that old sail I guess you'd have been glad enough to help Barhona to pitch me over the rail!"

As I spoke, I kicked at the sail-cloth, and there was a little tinkling sound as something rolled from the folds of the canvas. Stooping I struck a match, and when it flared up I gave a sharp exclamation of surprise and delight, for scattered on the planks were a dozen or more splendid diamonds!

The shot and the racket had aroused the crew forward, as well as the guard on the deck, and before my match flickered out the Customs men arrived with lanterns. By their light we carefully examined the canvas.

From the gash made by Barhona's knife, stone after stone was shaken out of the leach of the sail, where they had been neatly sewn into the canvas along the bolt-rope. By his last act the dead man—for Barhona, we discovered, had been shot through the heart—had betrayed his friend.

There is not much more to tell. The skipper turned State's evidence and told us that he had an understanding with the Portuguese ship-chandler, who sent the smuggled stones aboard the schooner hidden in balls of sail-twine. As he was an American, he and his sail-maker were let off with stiff fines, and promptly sailed away on the *Amanda and Mary*. I expect he had already made enough money to keep him comfortably for the rest of his life even without the few thousands he paid as a fine.

As for myself—well, two months later Mercedes and I were married.

Mr. Glass setting off on the voyage of exploration described in this article.

DOWN THE ARÄGUAYA IN A "DUG-OUT"

Told by Frederick C. Glass

and set down

by

REGINALD POUND

The experiences of a missionary-explorer during a trip down a little-known river in the interior of Brazil, visiting strange tribes of Indians far beyond the confines of civilization.

I.

ALTHOUGH, with the exception of three brief holidays at home, I have spent the past thirty years of my life in Brazil, during which time I have made many journeys into the heart of that vast and still little-known country, I think my most interesting trip was that which I made in a "dug-out" down the Araguaya River, from Goyaz to Bananal Island—the last-named a tract of country isolated by the Araguaya itself, which divides into two distinct branches just below St. José and becomes one again three hundred miles farther north.

My aim in making the journey was to get in touch with some of the more remote tribes of Indians—the Chavantes, the Javahes, the Tapirapès, and others—as well as to make the better acquaintance of those through whose country I had previously passed.

The first stage of the journey, a mule-ride of one hundred and twenty-eight miles, was devoid of interest, the scenery being monotonously flat almost all the way. I had arranged to embark by canoe at Santa Leopoldina, a tumbledown village of fifty houses and rather more than five times that number of inhabitants. As soon as we arrived here, O-di-di, an Indian who had volunteered to accompany me, went off to find a *camarada*, or guide, while I set out in search of the canoe, which I purchased through an agent in Goyaz.

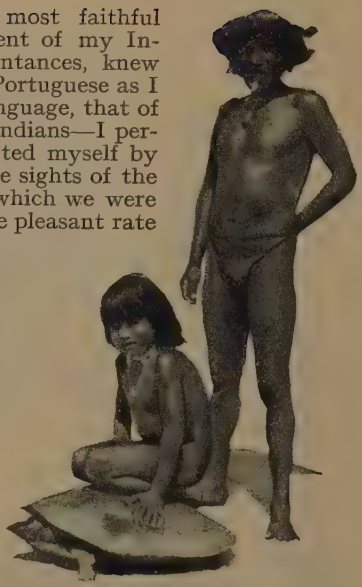
Alas! it did not take me long to discover that I had been badly swindled. The canoe, I found, had been broken up by its rascally owner *several years before!* However, after a delay of a day or so, I managed to hire a useful-looking and roomy *igarite*, or "dug-out" canoe, and, having secured the services of old Sylverio, a Brazilian, and his twelve-year-old son, as guides, we set off on our long and eventful journey downstream.

The canoe, cut out of a massive log, its sides raised by the addition of boards, had a platform at either end, one of which was covered in. It was propelled by single-bladed paddles and carried in addition to ourselves and a dog, half a ton of provisions, including a sack of oranges, handed to me at the last moment by my good friend and host, the

postmaster at Santa Leopoldina. Eighty miles farther down we put in at a riverside farm to take on board a stock of salt beef, which completed our commissariat. For the rest we had to depend on Mother Nature, who kept us bountifully supplied with fish, fruit, and eggs, the latter mostly those of the turtle.

Apart from its eggs, the turtle is esteemed a delicacy in these parts. Personally, I cannot say that I relish its meat, which to my untutored palate suggests chicken at least five years old, seasoned with sand. The eggs invariably remind me of brimstone and treacle, and are only agreeable to the taste when cooked with rice or some similar substance. Some of the turtles seen along the river are big and powerful enough to support the weight of a man, and I have more than once seen Indians endeavouring to disport themselves by riding them in the fashion of Louis de Rougemont, though not always with success, the turtle, as a rule, being too quick for them.

For the first few days, in consequence of our limited conversational resources—Sylverio was deaf and often taciturn, Manoel, his son, was dense, while O-di-di, one of the most faithful and intelligent of my Indian acquaintances, knew as little of Portuguese as I did of his language, that of the Caraja Indians—I perforce contented myself by observing the sights of the river along which we were gliding at the pleasant rate of six miles an hour. Although the Araguaya hereabouts is little short of two thousand miles from the sea, its average width is nearly a quarter of a mile, while where there are islands or sand-banks it broadens to nearly twice that distance. It is not particularly deep, however, and the necessity of avoiding the shallows adds considerably to the distance one expects to cover. In the case of our trip, for instance, the map shows us to have traversed roughly a thousand miles; yet we undoubtedly covered close on twice that distance, this not including our various excursions on shore.



A Caraja Indian youngster riding on a turtle.

A Caraja Indian chief whom Mr. Glass visited.

Travellers agree that one of the Araguaya's most beautiful characteristics is the clean, silvery stretches of sand that border its shores in many parts. These sand stretches are often half a mile wide, with a surface as smooth as that of a billiard table. Sometimes they are ruffled by the

wind into beautiful patterns and designs, while at others they are scored with the tracks of animals—the capivara, a sort of wild pig, the tapir, the turtle, and the more sinister Brazilian tiger, or jaguar, the arch-enemy not only of man but of other creatures of the wild. Here and there the sands give way to banks covered with vegetation, interspersed with fringes of dense, virgin forest, whose trees—some of them giants of their kind—sweep the very edge of the river, their branches combing its surface and constituting an abiding danger to the craft that ventures too near.

A typical Caraja. Note the lip "ornament."

On the third day out we were paddling vigorously along by way of keeping ourselves warm in the chilly morning air when I was startled by the sound of a short, sharp explosion, like that of a rifle shot, coming from just behind me. Turning round, I spotted what is known as the "Araguaya whale," a big, grey-green fish, measuring seven or eight feet in length, and almost as much in girth. The *boto*, as it is known, is perfectly harmless and will follow a canoe with the sagacity of a dog, indulging in all sorts of queer aquatic tricks. Occasionally it will take it into its head to dive with reckless abandon into the depths, following which the observer may see hundreds of smaller fish leap into the air in order to escape its violent rush.

INDIAN "SECOND SIGHT."

For the first hundred and ten miles of the trip the only human beings we saw after leaving Santa Leopoldina were those at the farm which I have mentioned. Then, on the fourth day, at breakfast time, three big canoes laden with Caraja Indians hove in sight, travelling swiftly upstream. They were finely proportioned men and exceedingly handsome, in spite of the artificiality of their colouring and markings. The incident furnished a good example of a characteristic which I had long noticed in the Indians of the Brazilian interior. Long before the canoes came into view O-di-di warned me

O-di-di brings ashore a turtle.

of their approach, although by what means he knew of it was a puzzle to me. The Indians seem to be gifted with something akin to second sight; certainly they have the power of seeing objects at a greater distance than most of us. I remember travelling once up a tributary of the Araguaya when a native who accompanied me notified me of the approach of an *igarite* containing two white men and half-a-dozen Indians. Now I have no reason to believe that my own sight is defective (on the contrary, it has always served me well), yet, although I scanned the river ahead of us until my eyes ached with the strain of doing so, I could discern no sign of a boat of any description. Presently, however, a mere speck showed itself away downstream, to resolve itself some time later into a canoe containing, as the native had stated, two white men and six Indians. Nor are these by any means the only examples of the kind that I could cite.

Soon after this we ran alongside the village of Chriches, a Caraja settlement of less than a dozen huts and a population of seventy people all told. A group of redskins ran down to meet us—well-built stalwarts whose naked bodies were stained almost scarlet. They at once conducted me to the chief, who was lying ill on a mat outside his hut, screened from the glare of the noonday sun by a palm-leaf shelter. His wife, a good-looking woman of fine physique, with hair that fell in smooth, loose tresses over her shoulders, was kneeling by his side, pressing her fists into his stomach in an attempt to afford him relief from the pains which gripped him at frequent intervals, though what was the cause of them I was unable to determine.

Although the Carajas are a kindly-disposed people, with many simple and child-like qualities, they are quickly roused to wrath. If you displease them, for instance, by being too sparing with your gifts, they will mutter "Ebina, ebina" (it is very bad) to one another and will crowd round you until, a little alarmed perhaps by their jostling and scowling, you fork out a more liberal supply of presents; while to favour one and not another is as good as asking for trouble on the spot. On this occasion I produced a parcel of fish-hooks and handed them round, to the evident satisfaction of all concerned.

Daybreak the next morning saw us take our departure from the village, the inhabitants of which we left asleep, blissfully unaware of our going. Three hours later we stopped

Botucudo Indians of the Central Brazilian forest.

for breakfast, and while Sylverio prepared the meal O-di-di went out to reconnoitre our surroundings. A few minutes afterwards he came running back to tell me that a party of the terrible Chavante Indians, the most savage of the many tribes to be found in this district, were breakfasting a quarter of a mile away, and that they were fully armed. Cautiously making my way into the scrub, I approached within perhaps a hundred yards of the Indians, whose movements I watched through a screen of bushes. They sat round a fire—ten or a dozen ferocious-looking redskins, cooking fish on sticks. Presently one of them held up his hand and called for silence. They cocked their ears and listened with strained attention for some seconds; then suddenly they darted up, grasped their weapons, and disappeared in an instant into the woods beyond.

Bororo Indians in ceremonial headdresses.

Four hours' more paddling brought us to the fast-decaying village of St. José, the very last outpost of civilization on this part of the river. One might go seven hundred miles beyond this point without encountering a white man, unless he happened to be a missionary or a solitary explorer, or a combination of the two, like myself.

So far the Fates had been very kind to me and my small crew, nothing untoward of any importance having happened to us. But our voyage was not destined to be entirely devoid of adventures, or misadventures, as I shall proceed to relate.

Our first really unpleasant experience befell us as we reached the mouth of the Rio dos Mortos (River of the Dead). Where this river flows into the Araguaya the latter narrows to little more than two hundred yards, the water being very deep and the currents unusually strong. It was at this juncture that we fell foul of the *banzeira*, a very strong northerly wind which, rising without warning, vents its fury on everything in its path. On this occasion we were gliding placidly along in mid-stream when the wind, coming seemingly from nowhere, struck us like a hurricane. The next moment we were tossing in a most alarming fashion, great waves breaking over the canoe, half filling it, and drenching us to the skin.

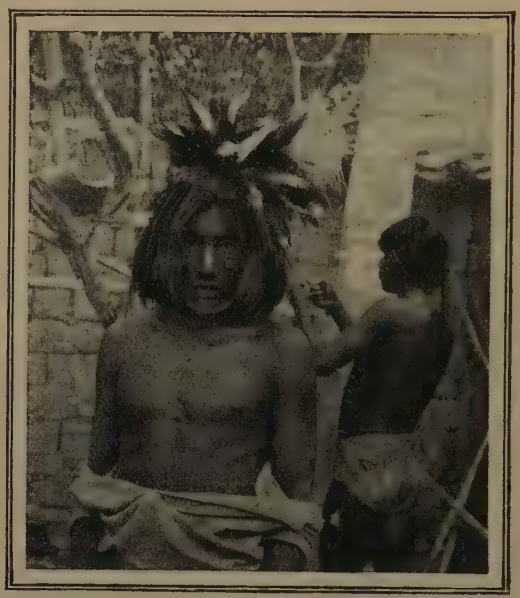
As soon as we recovered from the shock of the *banzeira's* onslaught we swung the canoe round and tried to run for the shore. But this manœuvre, we soon found, only increased our danger, and for some minutes it looked as if we must inevitably be swamped. Were we to be drowned outright, or should we be left to make a meal for the crocodiles? These were the questions that tortured our minds as we sat helplessly in our wildly-tossing craft.

I am quite convinced that if we had shipped as little as another gallon of water the canoe would have sunk like a stone. To our

astonishment and thankfulness, however, the waves presently subsided as suddenly and as unexpectedly as they had risen. Ten minutes later we were high, if not dry—and we were hardly that—on shore, and wondering at the miracle by which we had been saved.

O-DI-DI COMES HOME.

During the next three or four days we reached Bananal Island, towards whose northern extremity we paddled with unremitting steadiness. As we neared our objective O-di-di manifested a good deal of excitement, for he was approaching the scene of his earlier life as a Caraja tribesman. Suddenly he startled us by pulling out a horn and blowing vigorously — once, twice, three times. At the third blast redskins began to appear in all directions, some approaching us in canoes, others advancing towards us on foot over the sands. The first to actually reach us proved to be O-di-di's brother, following whom came a nephew, and soon my Indian friend was in the bosom of his family, some members of which embraced him affectionately, while others expressed their welcome by dancing and shouting.



A Tapirapè Indian. Notice the tribal mark, a ring on the cheek.

But although this little Caraja community seemed a happy, peaceful one, it was soon apparent to me that they were by far the most aggressive and war-like of their tribe, being engaged in almost constant fighting with their enemies, the Tapirapès. Weapons of war, mostly bows and arrows and spears, adorned the walls of every hut, many of them bearing signs of recent use.

The chief, Syriaco, was a sly old fellow, whose subsequent behaviour occasioned me much uneasiness. On my arrival he exhibited a great deal of curiosity in my baggage, and from his looks I felt quite sure that he meant mischief. This suspicion was confirmed when late that night I caught him in the act of stealing a parcel of fish-hooks from the canoe. Without pausing to consider the possible consequences of hasty action I hurried after him and gently but firmly demanded the return of the stolen property. Syriaco laughed like a naughty child; then he handed back the package and walked on, still laughing guiltily.

The next morning, just as dawn was streaking a misty sky, we crept down to the *igarite* and quietly pushed off, after being kept up overnight by the menacing behaviour of several of the tribesmen, who had been inspired by their chief's bad example to try and extort a further supply of presents from me. In the end their attitude became decidedly threatening, and I afterwards learnt, through O-di-di, who seemed distressed by his compatriots' conduct, that my situation was fast becoming desperate, and that bloodshed, with myself as the victim, was averted only by our stealthy departure from the village, in which I had promised to spend the succeeding two or three days.

Having visited several other villages on Bananal Island, I resolved to explore the lower reaches of the Tapirapè before turning the nose of the canoe homeward. As I have hinted, the Tapirapè Indians are to be feared in many respects, but there was no reason to suppose that they would object to the presence of an unarmed white man in their country. Sylverio demurred at first at the prospect, and O-di-di, I fancy, did not much like the idea of the venture, but I managed to overcome their scruples, and soon we were paddling smoothly westward between the tree-shaded banks of this practically unexplored river.

MAN-EATING FISH.

Although deep in some places, the Tapirapè is extremely shallow in others, and more than once we found ourselves stranded on a sandbank. Then it was a case of all hands jumping overboard and hauling the canoe into navigable water again. This proceeding, I may mention, was attended by an unpleasant risk, due to the presence of the terrible *raia*, a large flat fish which has a sort of trunk attached to its body, with a sharp-pointed spine four or five

inches in length. This formidable weapon is driven into the foot of the unwary bather or paddler, causing a wound which more often than not leaves the victim maimed for life. I myself shall always carry on the calf of one leg the "trade-mark" of this horrible fish. The spine tore out a veritable chunk of flesh, leaving me with a wound which was months in healing. Incidentally, the ankle of the same leg bears a scar caused by the bite of a *piranha*, a cannibal fish peculiar to Brazilian waters. I do not hesitate to declare that a school of these fierce little fish would convert a man into a skeleton inside half an hour, for they tear off the flesh in shreds with incredible quickness.

Our third day on the Tapirapè was made notable by an experience which I shall always regard as one of the most remarkable of my career.

We were gliding along, O-di-di and Sylverio paddling and I reading in the "shelter," when Manoel, who was doing nothing in particular, warned us, with a shout, of the approach upstream of three canoes laden with Indians. I glanced behind me and saw with apprehension that the Indians were heavily armed and that they were gesticulating to us. Then, bidding O-di-di and Sylverio to go on paddling as if they were unaware of the Indians' approach, I pretended to resume my reading, though I freely confess that my attention was focused, not on the book, but on what possibilities existed of evading our pursuers. There was little time for consideration of this problem, however, for the canoes overtook us with amazing swiftness, two shooting alongside us on our right and left and the third cutting sharply across our bows.

As soon as they had stopped us, the Indians jumped into the *igarite*, nearly swamping us with their weight. They were all big men, their bodies curiously scarred and painted, and it was the work of a moment for them to seize our paddles. They then turned our little craft about and, without vouchsafing a word of explanation, proceeded to paddle us downstream at a rate which made the *igarite* fairly creak with every powerful stroke that sent her along. All this time there was nothing for me to do but look as submissive as possible, which I think I did with excellent effect, for after three hours' paddling the Indians slackened pace and began to converse among themselves.

Between us O-di-di and I gathered that they were holding a council of war over us! Some apparently were for disposing of us summarily and annexing our goods; others were for taking the goods and turning us adrift without visible means of support. The chief, however, seemed unfavourable to both suggestions and indicated, more by gesticulations than by words, that I might have presents to bestow on them. Why, then, make an enemy of the white man? At the same time he gave me clearly to understand, again by signs, that I must on no account venture up the river again. He left no doubt whatever in my mind as to what would be my fate were I to flout this decree. Thereupon I produced a number of sugar blocks and, borrowing a hatchet, cut them into the requisite number of pieces, handing one piece to each Indian. This seemed to appease them considerably, for they are inordinately fond of sugar. Thereafter relations became less strained, and in a short time we were on quite a friendly footing.

The secret Indian graveyard visited by Mr. Glass, the first white man to see it.

THE SECRET GRAVEYARD.

Later that day we passed through a section of low-lying country, a prominent feature of

which was a big sandhill, on which I had commented during the journey up the river. The Indians, I knew from experience, choose such sites as this for their burying-places, and it occurred to me to ask to be shown one of these little-known spots, though I hardly dared hope that my request would be granted, so jealously do the Indians guard the secret of their graveyards. There was a good deal of discussion, as before, some of the Indians being for showing me, and others against doing so, until presently the chief gave a casting vote in my favour. We paddled on for another hour or more; then suddenly the canoe turned at right angles to the course we had been following and shot into the trees on the right bank of the river, the force of the Indians' last few strokes carrying us clean off the water on to a narrow path which, although invisible from the river, led down to it at this particular point. One result of this unorthodox method of landing was that the *igarite's* shelter was completely swept away, leaving her looking like a wreck.

The Indians motioned me to follow them inland, and we followed the path which led through thick woods and presently thinned down to rough undergrowth and scrub. Up hill and down dale we marched, until I began to wish that I had never raised the question of paying the place a visit. Presently, however, we came to a kind of clearing in the scrub, in which were a number of piles of wood, marking the sites of graves, together with innumerable urns and pans filled with bones. The secret of these burial places is so well kept that very few white men have ever seen them, I being the first to visit the one referred to here.

When an Indian dies it is the custom to bury him in a kind of underground chamber, wherein the body is slung in a hammock. Food for the sustenance of the deceased is placed in pots and left on the wood-pile covering of the grave. After a lapse of several months the body is taken down to the river, where the bones are scraped free of flesh and then placed in urns or pans and returned to the graveyard, this time on the surface of the ground, instead of in a chamber.

As soon as I had walked round the cemetery and taken a photograph, an operation which had to be carried out with great caution for fear of arousing a too-overwhelming curiosity in the Indians, I indicated that I wished to return to the river. Thereupon my guides, headed by the chief, took the path again, and soon I found myself back with O-di-di and Sylverio, both of whom seemed tremendously relieved to see me returning safe and sound. Having made the Indians a further present of sugar and some fish-hooks, I took my seat in the *igarite*—my crew had in my absence dismantled its wrecked canopy—and, waving farewell to the Indians, we set off downstream.

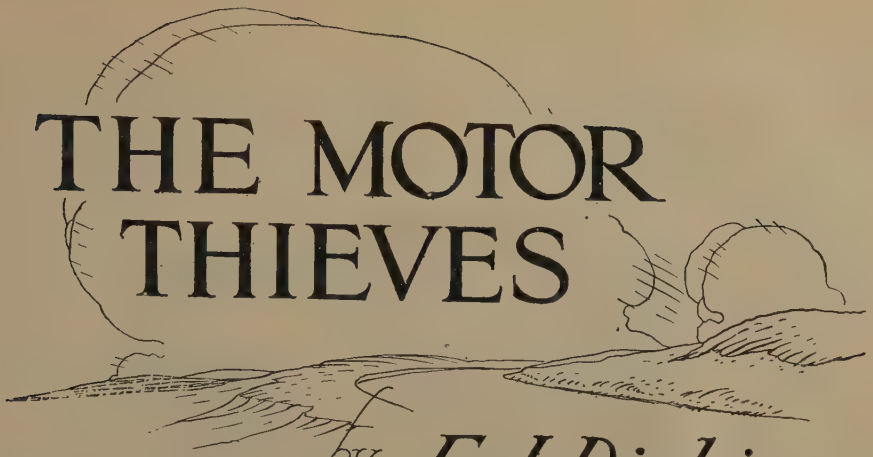
A few hours later we joined the Araguaya again, and then began the long and not unadventurous journey home. This I shall describe in another article.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE SEA-HAWK'S EYRIE.

THE remarkable erection here shown is a sea-hawk's nest, and was discovered on a desert island in the Red Sea by a WIDE WORLD reader. The nest stood over six feet high, and was built of pieces of coral, sea-shells, the remains of large fishes, pieces of rope, twigs, and rubbish of all kinds. The fact that the island was simply a stretch of desert sand, with no growth of any kind, and was situated ten miles from the mainland, made it difficult to understand where the birds got water to quench their thirst.

THE MOTOR THIEVES



by E. J. Dirking

ILLUSTRATED BY G. P. CARRUTHERS

Several of the leading American automobile clubs have their own organizations for chasing motor-thieves and tracing stolen cars, and occasionally the officials come across a very remarkable case. Here is the story of a chance discovery, a raid on a lonely ranch, and an exciting little battle.

At the time when this little adventure happened, early in 1922, I was employed in the Theft Bureau of an automobile club in Southern California. Having been kept more than busy for a month on end, rushing here, there, and everywhere, it felt pretty good to be able to sit at my desk and straighten out my office work instead of running all over the country looking for motor-thieves and "checking up" suspected cars.

I soon cleared everything up, and was sitting there feeling at peace with all the world when the door opened and a young man came in. Having introduced himself, he sat down and proceeded to relate a very curious story. It appeared that he was employed by a water company which was about to undertake the construction of a new irrigation system—ditching water from a mountain-stream north of the town of Rochester, California, and bringing it down to the surrounding country.

In order to get to the canyon on his first trip he found it necessary to drive through several ranches. He had gone to the owners to get permission to cross their land, and had received it in every case but one—that of a man whose ranch lay practically in the mouth of the canyon.

This rancher asked the engineer to give detailed reasons as to why he wanted to use this particular road. He replied that it afforded a shorter route, and as he would be making a number of trips weekly it would save him a good deal of time. To the engineer's surprise, however, the owner refused his permission, saying that he did not care to have people constantly using his road, and he could not refuse to one what he granted to another.

The young man was about to leave, feeling rather sore, when, glancing towards the back of the ranch-house, he saw two men apparently engaged in tearing a new closed motor-car to pieces. The owner of the ranch, observing his glance, promptly cut the conversation short, and got rid of him as speedily as possible.

On leaving the place the engineer began to think over the curious way in which the rancher had acted. This, taken in conjunction with the motor-car incident, led him to conclude that the best thing he could do was to let me know about the matter. There might be nothing in it; or there might be a great deal.

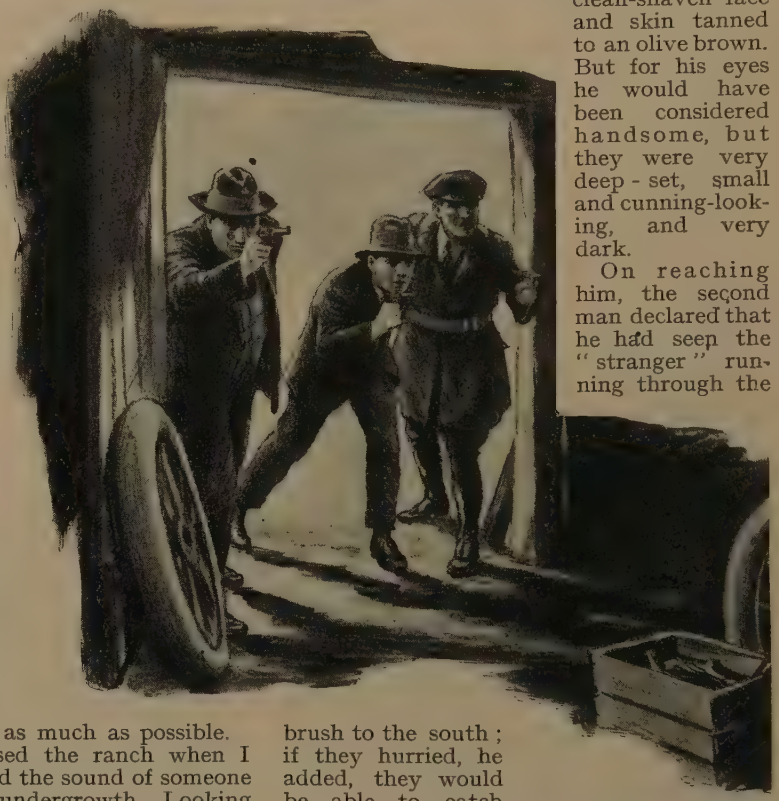
The breaking up of a brand-new car on a lonely ranch whose owner did not like visitors certainly sounded rather suspicious to me, and so I decided to investigate.

The following day, therefore, I drove out to the ranch lying nearest to the one I meant to look over. Leaving my car here, I proceeded to walk the last half-mile so that I could approach the place without being heard. Getting in sight of the buildings, I noticed a big barn behind the ranch-house, and decided that it would be best to swing round to the right through the brush and approach the barn from the rear. In this way I should get a chance to look at the back of the barn and perhaps see what kind of car it was that the engineer had told me about.

By crawling on my hands and knees I was able to get within a few feet of the barn without being seen, as the undergrowth was quite thick. Nearer and nearer I crept, until

I heard voices inside. Taking a chance, I wriggled the last few feet in the open in order to peep into the barn through one of the cracks in the woodwork.

My first impression was that I was looking into a busy garage, for there were automobile parts lying all over the floor, and I could see three men hard at work putting a car together. Realizing that something was very wrong, I at once dived back into the brush, but in my excitement at the discovery I had made—for I knew I had stumbled upon a band of motor-thieves—I did not go carefully enough. My foot caught in a bunch of sage-brush and I fell headlong to the ground. The brush being bone-dry, it made a loud crackling, and I knew that the sound would be heard inside. Scrambling quickly to my feet, I ran as quietly as I could round the house, keeping out of sight as much as possible.



I had almost passed the ranch when I heard loud talking and the sound of someone running through the undergrowth. Looking back at the house, I saw a man come out of the front door with a rifle in his hand and head in my direction. Knowing that the brush was not very thick farther down, I decided that if I once got into the open he would be able to pick me off easily. It was no use making a dash for it, so, hoping that he had not seen me, I made for a large thick bush and crawled beneath it.

I had scarcely got settled in my place of concealment before it occurred to me that I had not taken the precaution to ascertain if there were any dogs about the place. If there *were*, they would very soon locate me; and I was getting ready to leave my hiding-place and take my chance of crossing the open stretch without being seen, when I heard loud crashings in the brush and the sound of men running.

Peering cautiously out from my cover, I saw that the man who had come from the house was now within twenty feet of the bush where I lay concealed and was heading directly towards it. I reached for my pistol and was just getting it ready when someone behind yelled that I had gone the other way. Thereupon the man in front stopped and waited for his informant to come up. This gave me a good opportunity of looking at him. He stood at least six feet two inches and was very broad in the shoulders, with a clean-shaven face and skin tanned to an olive brown. But for his eyes he would have been considered handsome, but they were very deep-set, small and cunning-looking, and very dark.

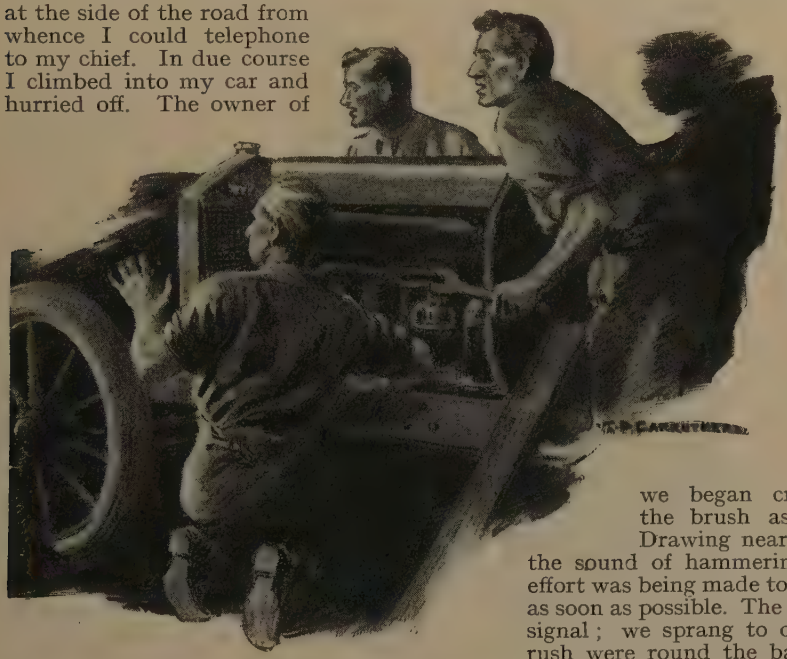
On reaching him, the second man declared that he had seen the "stranger" running through the brush to the south; if they hurried, he added, they would be able to catch me in the open and stop me with a bullet. With that they started off, but I thought my fate was sealed, for, instead of going round the bushes, they began wading *through* them! I flattened myself as much as possible as the angry leader crashed through the brush, and luckily he just missed me. His followers—there were several of them—were a short distance to the right and presently passed him, running at full speed.

When they had all disappeared I gave a sigh of relief and began to think out a plan for getting out of the brush and into touch with my superior officer. I decided finally that I would wait until my pursuers returned to the ranch-house, when I would proceed to the place where I had left my car.

Before long I heard the voices of the returning men, and, not wishing to raise my head, cuddled close to the ground. The fellows were talking in excited tones, and as they drew closer I could distinguish the voice of the leader. If spies were nosing round, he said, the game was up; the best thing they could do was to clear out as quickly as possible.

One of his companions replied that, having spent so much time in collecting the motor parts, it seemed a great pity to abandon them. He suggested that they should get as many cars as possible into running order that night and then make for the "tall timbers." The leader apparently agreed to this. They proceeded towards the house, and I heard no more.

When the rascals were all out of sight, I hurriedly scrambled from my hiding-place and made towards the spot where I had left my car, realizing that there was not a minute to be lost. The thing to be done now was to reach a certain ranch-house at the side of the road from whence I could telephone to my chief. In due course I climbed into my car and hurried off. The owner of



"As we entered they leapt to their feet and gazed at us in utter amazement."

the ranch-house was fortunately at home, and permission to use his telephone was quickly gained. While waiting for my call to be answered, I questioned the man regarding his odd neighbours. All he could tell me, he said was that the leader of the men there came through his ranch at times but never stopped. He added that on an average he was awakened twice a week by his dogs barking at motor-cars that passed the ranch a little before midnight, but that hitherto he had not paid much heed to the fact.

The telephone bell rang at that moment, and I hurriedly told my story to the chief, informing him where I was. "I'll be on my way to you in five minutes," he said.

Knowing that the best thing I could do was to remain at the ranch-house until reinforcements arrived, in order to see that my quarry did not leave by road, I settled down with my pipe and waited.

Half an hour passed, and I was beginning to get anxious, when I saw two motor-cars coming up the road from the town. As they drew nearer I saw that they contained my chief and seven of my brother officers.

After explaining the lie of the land to him, the chief decided to drive to the ranch-house where I had first left my car, and follow out my previous tactics.

This was done, and after leaving our cars we walked through the brush until we were within a short distance of the ranch-house. Here we paused while I explained how we could reach the barn by proceeding to the right, thus approaching the house from the front. It was decided that three men should crawl as near to the house as possible and that the rest of us should approach the barn from the rear. At a given signal we were to close in on the buildings.

As we came in sight of the place we began crawling, keeping to the brush as much as possible. Drawing near the barn, we heard the sound of hammering; evidently every effort was being made to get the cars together as soon as possible. The chief gave the agreed signal; we sprang to our feet, and with a rush were round the barn and in the door before anyone could prevent us. From all indications we must have taken the inmates entirely by surprise, for the three men whom I had originally seen through the crack were working on a partly assembled car. As we entered, they leapt to their feet and gazed at us in utter amazement.

Not seeing the tall leader, I came to the conclusion that he must be in the house, which was to be rushed by our companions. Just then we heard three sharp pistol reports, and, quickly handcuffing our three prisoners, who offered no resistance, we left a man to guard them and hurried towards the ranch.

We had scarcely quitted the shelter of the barn when there came another loud report and one of our men grabbed at his arm. Apparently our fellows had been unable to capture the leader, and we guessed that he had now barricaded himself in the house and was going to put up a fierce fight. Seizing our wounded comrade, we rushed back to the barn to make plans for the leader's capture.

We questioned our prisoners concerning him, but had to use threats before they would respond to our inquiries. Finally the youngest of the trio, a fellow of about twenty-four, said he was tired of the whole business and would answer any questions we liked. He described the lay-out of the house to us, and said he was quite sure the leader only had a revolver with him, because just before our arrival they had brought all their guns and ammunition out to the barn and stowed them in a car, in case they had to take to flight suddenly. The leader had then gone back to the house to do the final packing-up.

Presently we sent one of our men round to the front of the house to see how the others were getting on. Knocking a board out of the back of the barn, he quickly disappeared into the brush, being absent about a quarter of an hour. On his return he told us that he had found our men at their posts outside the house, but that one of them had been wounded in the head by a bullet when attempting to enter. They had therefore retired to safe positions in the bushes.

After a consultation, the chief decided to rush the ranch-house from the front and back simultaneously, as we knew that our quarry would soon run out of ammunition if we drew his fire. When we heard the first shot, it was arranged, we were to make for the house with all speed.

We waited in the barn for about ten minutes longer, and then set out for the house, each man zigzagging in a different direction in order to minimize the risk of being hit by stray shots. At last, when we were all in position, the chief gave the agreed signal for both parties to attack. I was at the back, and our party had almost reached the house when we heard a series of shots from the front, and knew that the leader's attention was being drawn to that quarter. Quickly we made for the rear entrance, and three of us threw all our weight on the door. It fell with a crash, and we rushed in. A hallway ran straight through to the front door, and not seeing anyone we concluded that our quarry must be in one of the front rooms.

We listened intently, hoping to gain some clue as to his whereabouts, and finally decided that he was in a front room upstairs, on the west side. We arranged to attack this room, and sprang up the staircase, expecting every moment to come under a hail of bullets. The door, we found, was fastened, but again we threw our combined weight against it and it fell heavily inwards. Luckily for us, the leader must have been standing close to it and was hit as it crashed down, for as we crowded into the room he was swaying backwards and forwards, apparently half-dazed, attempting to get a straight aim at us with his gun.

Three of the men who raided the motor-thieves. The Author is in the centre and his chief to the right.

Seeing that prompt action was essential, I leapt forward and seized his right hand. This seemed to bring him to his senses, for with the strength of a giant he flung me off. Before he could swing his pistol round, however, three of us closed with him and we all went to the floor in a heap. He fought with the utmost desperation, but in vain, and we soon had him safe in handcuffs. We then fetched our other three captives, and, leaving one of our men in charge of the gang, returned to the city to make further investigations regarding the stolen cars. Looking up the records and tracing the cars in the barn, we were able to connect our prisoners with a series of motor-thefts that had occurred about a year previously. We also found, as I had thought from his accent, that the leader of the gang was at one time a resident of Texas, and four large cities were eager to get hold of him for various crimes.

The young *employé* of the water company was completely taken aback when presented with a reward of five hundred dollars for the part he had played in helping us to track the motor-thieves.

A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA

by Rose Wilder Lane

Very few people know just where Albania is; still fewer know anything about it. The interior is a maze of mountains, inhabited by wild tribes who have preserved their independence and their own peculiar manners and customs for thousands of years.

In these fascinating articles Mrs. Lane describes her adventures among the remote northern mountains—a picturesque country where the tribal blood-feud still flourishes and where the rare Western visitor finds himself back in the Middle Ages.

Illustrated by R. CATON WOODVILLE.

IV.

At midnight Perolli and Padre Marjan retired to the cold wet living-room, to roll themselves in blankets and sleep on the floor. We three girls sat shivering on the mattress and wished we knew what the chiefs were deciding as to the fate of poor Perolli.

We were awakened in the damp chill of a watery grey dawn. Padre Marjan was knocking at the door. In a moment he entered, barefooted, in his long brown robe girded with cord, and going to the incongruous office desk he carefully unlocked a lower drawer and took out a box of soap. There were twenty small cakes in the box. He took one out, put the box back in the drawer, and locked it.

He had been followed by a small boy—a very serious child, visibly nervous. About eleven years old, he wore the long, tight, black-braided white trousers, coloured sash, and woolly fringed short black jacket of his people, but they were all soaking wet and very old, mended and mended again until hardly any of the original fabric was left. His bare feet were blue with cold, and so were his bare arms, for the Scanderbeg jacket has no sleeves, and he did not wear a shirt. He stood very straight, and swallowed hard, keeping his face impassive.

Padre Marjan turned to him, holding the cake of soap. He spoke earnestly and at some little length. Then he presented the cake of soap to the child, who bent a knee to receive it, and kissed the Padre's hand and then the soap. An impressive little ceremonial, which we witnessed wide-eyed from the mattress where we sat huddled among the blankets.

We looked inquiringly at Betsy, who understood Albanian. Her eyes shone. "It's a school prize!" she said, and, listening: "He's the best scholar in school; already he can read and write. Isn't it splendid?" The boy saluted us gravely; one saw that he had just gone through a profound emotional experience. "Long may you live!" said he, and went out.

Padre Marjan said that the school had been opened ten days before. On the first day there were forty-three pupils; on the second day, sixty-two; on the third day, ninety-seven. All the tribe was sending its children to live with relatives in Thethis and go to school. No more than ninety-seven could get into the Padre's living-room; the others must wait until, with the money Alex and Betsy had collected, the school house could be built. There were no benches or desks, of course; the children stood packed tightly in the cold room, and he taught them by writing with a piece of chalk on the walls. Already this boy could read and write words of one syllable, and merited a cake of soap. Padre Marjan, at his own expense, had sent two hundred miles to Tirana for fifty cakes of soap, to be used as prizes. There was, of course, no other soap in the tribe, and a more magnificent gift could not have been imagined.

The boy who got the cake of soap walked every morning nine miles over the mountains to reach school at seven o'clock, and at nine, after school, he walked back, took out the goats, and spent the whole day climbing trees and cutting twigs for them to eat.

Padre Marjan said that as soon as he knew the Americans would build the school he had started teaching, and he had written to the Government in Tirana and asked if it would help. He brought from the desk the letter he had received in reply. Written by hand—the poverty-stricken young Government had no typewriters—and sent by messenger

into the mountains, in six weeks it had reached Thethis, and the Padre kept it wrapped in a bit of hand-woven silk. Betsy spelled it out; it said that the Government would give a hundred kronen a month to pay the teacher. It was signed for the Minister of the Interior by Rroc Perolli.

"My sainted grandmother!" cried Betsy. "Where *is* Perolli?" At that very minute the chiefs might be sending word to the Serbs to come and get him. The chiefs themselves would surely not violate the hospitality of their priest, but the Serbs would have no reverence for it—and they were only a few miles away. When we thought what a bargain the chiefs might drive with the Serbs for Perolli, it seemed too much to hope that one of them, at least, would not hand him over.

Padre Marjan spoke warmly of Perolli, whom he had so innocently betrayed; he said that he had once seen him at a distance in Scutari, and the village was honoured to have him for a guest. While he said this he wrapped the precious letter in its silk and laid it carefully away in the desk. Then he went away, saying that he would send us a fire.

In a few minutes it came—a pile of hot coals in a large iron baking dish. Cheremi set it in the middle of the floor—where, indeed, it made little impression on the damp chill of the room—and went to fetch us cups of Turkish coffee. We swallowed it hastily and dressed as quickly as possible, talking about what we could do to save Perolli. We thought that perhaps as American citizens we could overawe the Serbs, but none of us really had much hope of it. Indeed, we had no right to attempt American protection for a secret service agent of the Albanian Government along the borders of the land held by invading Jugo-Slav armies. Still, we did not know that he was a secret service agent; we had every right to suppose that he was merely our companion on a vacation trip. It was all very vague, but distressing.

At last Perolli appeared, and told us, to our vast relief, that Lulash, the chief, had sworn a *besa*, a sort of word of honour, that his whole tribe would be loyal to the Albanian Government as long as he lived, and therefore would not hand Perolli over to the Serbs. "If only the other chiefs will do the same," he added, "I shall be safe."

Later Lulash himself came to see us and had a chat. When he was ready to go he rose to his six feet of height, splendid in fine white wool and silken sash, the jewel-studded chains clinking together on his chest, and swung his rifle again on his back. "I will go now to my own house," he said. "If the Zaushka from America"—that was me—"would follow me and drink coffee before my fire, the path her feet would take would always be flowery with spring to my eyes."

There is something contagious in that sort of thing. "Say to him that my feet will be happy on the path," I said to the amused Perolli.

"Glory to your lips," returned the gratified Lulash. "Glory for ever to the little feet that brought you to Thethis."

The "little feet" were wearing at that moment two pairs of thick woollen stockings, indescribably ludicrous beneath the flapping legs of trousers around which I had not re-wound the soaked puttees, and Perolli and I were helpless with laughter as soon as the door had closed behind Lulash.

"How am I ever going to get to his house?" I asked, wiping my eyes.

"Oh, we'll get somebody to make you some goat-skin *opanki*," said Perolli. "He won't expect us very soon." Then he flung out his arms in a jubilant gesture. "A *besa* of peace from Shala!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't have hoped for that! It means peace through the whole north, it means internal security for northern Albania—if I can only get the other tribes to join it."

Betsy and Alex came in, desperately anxious to know what had happened, and we three did a dance of pure delight. It was an inexpressible relief to know that Perolli would get out of Shala alive, and the *besa* seemed almost too good to be true.

In Padre Marjan's kitchen we found at least twenty visitors from the village; the men were there again, among them all the chiefs but Lulash. The fireplace was full of bubbling pots and sizzling pans; the Padre, helped informally by whoever happened to be nearest, was preparing our luncheon. My dilemma was announced; I stood before them shoeless. A boy ran at once across the village and returned streaming wet, bringing two pieces of goat-skin, tanned with the soft brown hair on it.

To the eager interest of everyone, I set my feet on the pieces, and there were many exclamations of wonder at their smallness and curious shape—the toes close together and making a point, instead of arching, each one separately, as the toes of their people do. Meanwhile the boy, with a nail, drew the outlines of my feet on the leather and went away with it to his house, where the *opanki* would be made.

While this was happening the older men of the tribe went back to the cold bedroom with Perolli, each one adding his own *besa* of loyalty to the one Lulash had sworn, and asking many questions about the aims and strength of the Tirana Government.

Later on my *opanki* arrived. The edges of the leather had been turned upward, and joined across the toes by an intricately-woven network of raw-hide thongs. Another network made a heel-piece, and there were thongs to go around the ankles. With the *opanki* came a pair of short purple socks, reaching just to the ankle, where they ended in points bound with black braid and stiff

with gold and silver embroidery. These were really separate linings to the stiff and hard *opanki*, which had to be soaked a long time in water and put on wet in order to get them on at all.

Very conscious of my feet, which seemed large and unwieldy objects flopping at the end of my legs, I went across the flat wet fields with Perolli to drink coffee in the house of Lulash.

The house of Lulash was different from any of the others we had seen. It stood on a castle-like rock; we went up to it by a stairway cut in the side of a sheer cliff with a waterfall pouring down it. A natural bridge of rock crossed the little space between the cliff and the rock on which the house of Lulash was built; a furious little stream roared beneath us as we crossed the bridge; then there was another stairway leading up to the house.

Lulash and a dozen men and women of his household stood outside the door to receive us. No rifles were fired. We passed through a double line of salutes and greetings, and into a high-arched stone doorway. There was a little hall, floored and walled with stone, and a massive stone stair leading upward. This we climbed, and were in a large, whitewashed room, lighted by a window, and furnished with beautifully painted chests and a few hand-woven rugs. But this was not the only room; there were others, and leading us through several arched stone doorways Lulash brought us into the living-room, where I involuntarily exclaimed, "My house in San Francisco!"

It was exactly the same; long, wide, with the large grey stone fireplace in the centre of one wall, folded blankets of goats' wool piled like cushions around it; the alcove where my book-shelves used to be was there—an old carved chest stood in it; and there were my windows, where the nasturtiums used to grow and the orange curtains frame the blues of San Francisco Bay and the Berkeley hills and the sky. I went to those windows at once. But then the magic departed; there were only the flat wet lands of Thethis below me, the stone houses and stone fences, and beyond them the blue and purple and white and black and rose-colour of the snow-crested mountains, seamed with a hundred waterfalls.

"Tell them that it is exactly like my house at home, far away on the other side of the world," I said to Perolli. Then I sat down on a pile of folded blankets before the fire, not yet sure that I was not dreaming, and that the strange chests and stranger figures of turbaned men and barbarically dressed barefooted women would not vanish when I awoke.

"I did not think," said Lulash, "that any of our houses would be as fine as an American house." He was so pleased that his hand quivered a little on the long handle of the tiny brass pot in which he was making the coffee. So I told them that only our finest houses are of stone; that my house was of wood, and much smaller than his. But all our houses had windows, I said.

"Yes," said Lulash, wistfully, "windows are very good; I always wish that all our houses had windows. But first we must have a *besa* of peace among all the tribes; it is not safe now to have windows. A man never knows when his tribe will be 'in blood,' and enemies will shoot him through windows. You see that mine are so placed that it would be difficult to shoot through them, and I have heavy shutters for closing them at night, when the firelight makes it easier to see us from outside."

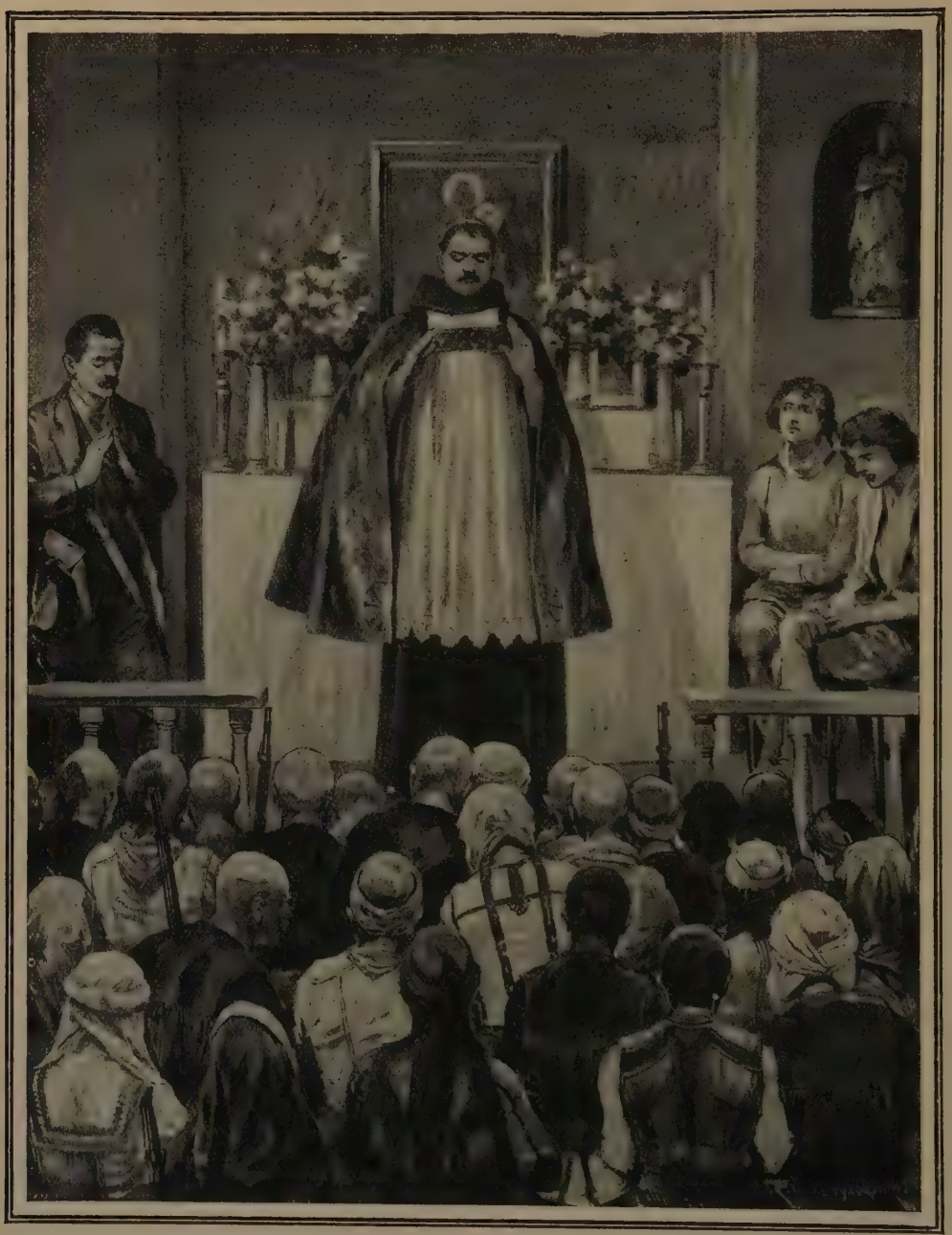
But he was pleased that I praised his windows; he had gone all the way to Scutari to bring up the glass of which he had heard, and made the frames with his own hands. They were on leather hinges, so that they would open and let in the air; he said he had observed that sunshine and air were good things, and if good outdoors, why not good in houses? "But it will be a long time before my people can have windows," he said sadly.

He did not think it was good to keep the sheep and goats with the family, either; all his flocks were driven at night into their own quarters, on the lower floor of the house.

The next morning was Sunday, and we were awakened by the church bell. It hung in a belfry over the Padre's kitchen, and the Padre pulled the rope himself. Then tucking his brown robe about his bare ankles he descended the broken, draughty stairs to the church, and we followed him through blasts of cold rain that the wind drove through holes that had been made in the walls by the invading Serbs.

The church itself was bleak and cold; a bare room, whitewashed, with the Stations of the Cross represented by crudely coloured lithographs stained by the damp. A railing separated the body of the church from the altar, where a very brightly coloured picture of the Virgin hung, surrounded by wreaths of paper flowers, above a rough table with a bit of brocade spread carefully upon it. We girls were given a bench inside the railing, and sat there in a row, in our many-times-water-soaked sweaters and trousers. Outside the railing all the women and children and half the men of the village knelt on the cold floor, and their rain-drenched garments, threadbare and patched, made pools of water about their knees. The rain was still pouring down, as undiminished as a river, and the sound of it and of the waterfalls filled the chill place.

Padre Marjan began the Mass, his high Albanian voice chanting the Latin, and the congregation made the responses in the same tongue. A ragged, barefooted man came to



"Outside the railing all the women and children and half the men of the village knelt on the cold floor.

swing the censer for the Padre, and Perolli, in his neat English tweeds, revolver and knife swinging at the belt, also assisted, going behind the altar with the Padre to help him put a brocaded robe over the brown one, and reverently handing the cup and the wine.

After Mass the Padre dashed upstairs to look at our cooking dinner, and hastened down again for a christening. Nothing could have been more touching than Padre Marjan —thin, worn by fasting and work, bare-footed, the edge of his brown robe showing below the front hem of a white cotton garment—bringing into the arms of the

Church the tiny, wrinkled infant strapped in its painted cradle. The woman who held it looked at him with a sort of apprehensive anxiety; the crowd pressed informally around them. Every time the Padre turned to fetch the little glass bottle of oil, or the tin can of holy water, or the square of crocheted cotton lace that he laid over the cradle, the packed bodies gave way for him.

At the end, "Is it a boy or a girl?" he asked.

"A girl," the woman whispered. And the Padre ended his solemn words with the name "Regina."

The woman sighed and her tenseness relaxed. It must have been a great moment for the mother, I thought; someone said that she had carried the cradle forty miles over the mountains for this christening. We did want to give the baby something; for the hundredth time we regretted not having brought presents, and a hurried ransacking of all our possessions produced only a little coloured handkerchief. But when we gave it to the baby it was as though we had presented a golden bowl. The excitement, the passing from hand to hand, the reverent marvelling over such weaving, such colour!

Soon after this a matter far more serious distracted our attention, for Perolli, taking me aside, said to me: "You say you love the Albanians and the Albanian mountains. Do you want to stay here?"

"I'd love to stay here for years," I said. "It's the most beautiful country I've ever seen, and the most interesting people. But I can't, of course. Why?"

"Well, you can, if you really do want to," said he. "I have received a proposal of marriage for you."

"*What?*" said I. "You're joking!"

"Not at all," said Perolli, indignantly. "Do you think marriage is a thing to joke about?"

"Why should anyone here want to marry me?" I demanded.

"You needn't take it as a compliment to your personal charm," said Perolli. "It's really your short hair. But I can get twenty thousand kronen for you, if you want to marry and stay here."

"Twenty thousand kronen!" I cried. "Two thousand dollars? For me? Here? But for Heaven's sake, why? You don't mean anyone thinks me beautiful, among all these Albanian women?" said I indignantly.

"Of course not," said Perolli.

"And I can't even talk their language," I went on. "What do you mean—twenty thousand kronen? And what has short hair got to do with it?"

"Well," said Perolli, "Lulash would like to have an American wife. I don't mean he put it to me so crudely as that. He didn't actually put it to me at all, in fact. But I know that he will give twenty thousand kronen for you, and you can stay here and remodel the whole life of Shala, if you like."

"But why me? Why not Betsy, or Alex?"

"Because their hair is long, and so naturally these people think they are already married. But your hair is short, so they think you are a 'sworn virgin.' In these mountains, when a girl is old enough to marry and absolutely refuses to marry the man to whom she has been promised, she may escape the marriage by swearing before the chiefs of the two tribes an oath of life-long virginity. Then she cuts her hair and takes a man's place in the tribe. Naturally, when they see you, at your age, with short hair, they think that is what you did. If you were an Albanian no one would dream of marrying you, for the man to whom your parents gave you would have to kill your husband to clear his honour, and all the chiefs before whom you had sworn would be bound in honour to see that your husband *was* killed. But America is a long way off; that man and the chiefs would hardly come so far after you, especially as your customs are so different. Besides, I think Lulash would take the chance, anyhow. He really very much wants a woman to help him with the people, and he will not marry a mountain woman."

"You mean he would listen to my ideas and take my advice?"

"Of course. What else is a wife? He would like nothing better than to have you give him American ideas."

"But I thought a woman had no rights at all here."

"How absurd! She has all the rights that a man has."

"But women aren't in the tribal councils?"

"They are when it's a council of the whole tribe. They aren't chiefs, of course, but chiefs always talk things over with their wives."

"But women are bought and sold. You just said so. Didn't you say you were offered twenty thousand kronen for me?"

"It's an unusual situation. Here you are, without a family; I'm the only man in the party. Naturally he thinks of me as in the position of a brother, or a father. The man's family always pays money to the girl's family before a marriage, but the girl isn't sold; she's been betrothed in her childhood, for any number of reasons. The money the man pays is spent for the girl's clothes and household things. Well, what do you say?"

"Why, Perolli," I said, "of *course* I can't marry a Shala chief!"

The next morning, in the rain that still continued to flood down from apparently inexhaustible skies, we all stood on the edge of the cliff half a mile down the trail, and said farewell to the village of Thethis. Everyone had come so far on the trail with us; Padre Marjan thanked us in the name

of the village; Lulash spoke, his hand on his heart; Betsy and Alex and I addressed them with as many happy phrases of thanks as we could devise. All the guns were fired and fired again; all along the cliff-tops the boys were giving a last gymnastic display.

"Go on a smooth trail!" they called after us, as we went over the rustic bridge that crosses the green stream dotted with boulders; and looking back from far down the trail we saw the people of Thethis still standing there, a black-and-white and gorgeously coloured mass against the grey rocks.

Our way led down the Lumi Shala. Going north-eastward from Scutari we had reached that river's headwaters at Thethis, and now, crossing it, we came south-eastward, high on the shoulders of the mountains that wall its narrow valley. Higher still, seen at intervals through breaks in the lower mountains, a wall of pure white snow rose into the sky—the second great mountain range, which we were to cross to reach still more hidden fastnesses and wilder tribes.

We went across the lands of the Shala tribe, but there were no villages on the way and no scattered houses; it was fifteen miles to our next stopping-place, the village of Shala. "An hour and a half," said Cheremi gaily; he had learned to speak short English sentences in the few days he had been with us, but he could not learn that fifteen miles of exhausting mountain climbing meant more than ninety pleasant minutes to anybody.

Padre Marjan had lent us his little horse, a beautiful bay, hardly larger than a Shetland, but perfectly built, with a saddle of red leather held on by finely woven woollen straps. He went across slides of slippery shale, climbed giant boulders, walked on a log that crossed a two-hundred-foot gorge, and made his way straight up the courses of waterfalls as easily and cheerfully as a pet dog.

An indescribably wild and beautiful way it was, with hundred-mile vistas opening before us as we rounded cliffs or passed the ends of smaller mountain ranges. There were villages on the opposite bank; we saw them built against the mountains like clumps of grey swallows' nests—the villages of Shoshi, with whom Shala was "in blood." At the foot of the waterfall streams that dashed down their cliffs we saw now and then a little mill, flooded with water, its roof of slate hardly showing above the flood. Here, in drier seasons, Shoshi ground its grain or put the loosely woven white woollen cloth to soak in the running water and be pounded by paddle-wheels until it shrunk into the felt-like fabric that makes their garments.

Here and there a red-brown or grey-white moving patch at the foot of a clump of mangled trees announced that a little shepherd was there, clinging to a tall stump and cutting twigs to throw down to the goats and sheep; we were too far away to see him. And there were other clumps of trees green with uncut leaves; always near these we saw, bronze-brown among the grey rocks, structures taller than a man, and shaped like a bee-hive. These were trees that the axes spare until the leaves are fully grown and filled with sap. Then the branches are cut and piled in a circle, the cut ends outward and the leaves to the centre, layer upon layer, until the bee-hive shape is completed, when they are weighted down with rocks. The leaves remain green and nutritious, and slowly through the winter these curious *silos* are demolished armful by armful and carried into the houses to be fed to the sheep and goats.

The sky was still a dark leaden grey, with darker clouds moving sluggishly among the mountains, and the air still seemed more than half-full of falling water. The soaked rawhide *opanki* were like soft rags on my feet; at every step my woollen stockings emptied and filled with water like sponges, and all our fingers were shrunk in ridges from the long wetting. But we were gay; we sang songs, and we were surprised to find the way so short, and could not believe that we had reached Shala when we came into a village and were saluted by five young men drawn up in line.

It was indeed Shala, and in a moment we were being welcomed by the Padre and escorted up a stone stairway into his rooms above the church.

These were better rooms than Padre Marjan's; the windows were not broken and the walls were solid. But they were bitterly cold, and this priest was not our Father Marjan. He was older, squarer, more sturdy, his hair was iron-grey, and his presence was commanding—so commanding that it was a bit chilly. He led us formally into a large, bare room, where there was a long table and four hand-made chairs; he gave us each a chair and himself remained standing, talking with grave formality to Perolli.

We sat there half an hour, an hour, an hour and a half. There was no fire; the room had the feeling of a room that has never had a fire in it. We suggested to Perolli that he should take us into the kitchen to get warm, but he silenced us with a glance; indeed, it was obvious that we were in the hands of the priest, and that it would be an unforgivable affront to make such a suggestion to him.

We were so cold from the first, holding ourselves so tight to prevent our shivering from becoming uncontrollable, that I do not know when the real chills began. It was Alex's grey-blue lips and cheeks that first alarmed me. I said to Perolli that he *must* get us warmed. He answered that before long we should have something to eat, and that would warm us.

Then I saw Alex's cheeks turn to a hot

"The little horse walked on a log that crossed a two-hundred-foot gorge."

burning red, and I said; "Perolli, you've got to get Alex a chance to get into dry clothes. Can't you see she's ill?"

"Are you ill?" said Perolli, and "Oh, no, no, not at all!" said Alex, her teeth chattering together. "I would like to lie down, if I could; but it's all right."

"Perolli," I said, desperately, "tell our host we've got to get Alex dry and warm. If you don't, I'll undress her and rub her right here!"

I would have said more, but I couldn't. A pain like a knife stabbed through my lungs, and before I could catch my breath it

stabbed me again. It's the kind of pain you can't describe; if you've felt it you know it, and if you haven't, you can't. I recognized it; it had struck me years before and laid me in a hospital for six weeks. Pneumonia!

How Alex felt I don't know; for myself, I was in a blue panic. I have never wanted anything so much as I wanted to collapse right there, in sheer terror. Pneumonia, in Shala, a hundred and fifty miles from a doctor, from medicines, from even a bed. Pneumonia, among the Albanians, whose only medical knowledge of it was that it came from drinking rain-water!

Perolli had been surprised by my exclamation. "Why didn't you say you were uncomfortable?" he said to Alex. "If I'd had any idea——"

"I'm all right," said Alex, getting the words out quickly and shutting her teeth hard.

"Well, what are you fussing about, then?" said Perolli to me, anxiously. "I'd take you girls to a fire if I could, but you see they're cooking in the kitchen, and naturally the Padre doesn't want to take his guests there. We've been here three hours now; dinner ought to be ready before long, and you'll be all right as soon as you've had something to eat."

The pain stabbed through my lungs again, taking all my breath and engaging all my self-control, and I wilted. I wasn't the good sport Alex was.

"I know I'm abominably rude," I said, "but I'm too tired. I want to lie down. Ask the Padre if there isn't somewhere we can lie down till dinner."

It was too bad. Guests shouldn't behave like that. There was another room, and it had a mattress on the floor, but there was no candle. A bit of blazing wood must be brought from the kitchen to light me into it, our bags must be fetched, the household was quite upset. I apologized and apologized, but at last I was able to tear off my sopping stockings, pull some of our blankets over me, and lie down in the darkness.

Presently we were awakened and brought out to dinner. It did not seem real. I remember it like a delirium. There was hot soup, but each mouthful seemed a cannon-ball to get through a closing throat, and there were cornbread and goats' milk cheese; the Padre stood at the head of the table through the meal, holding the torch. He did not eat with us, Perolli said, because we were using all the dishes he had. It transpired, too, that there was but the one mattress in the house; the Padre's niece slept on it. He himself slept on the floor with a blanket. The niece was a sweet, round-cheeked little girl of about fourteen. She had been educated in Vienna and Munich, and seemed most desperately lonely in Shala, hungry for companionship and talk of the things she knew.

Alex and I took the mattress, with the simple direct selfishness of miserable animals; it was very narrow, but we lay head-to-foot on it, and managed. Betsy, Perolli, and Rexh slept in blankets beside us on the floor. All night long Alex moaned in her sleep, and I could not tell the difference between reality and delirium, but the knives in my lungs brought me out of the mists now and then to hear the ceaseless pouring sound of rain and feel the damp chill of the room.

In the grey morning Alex and I sat up and looked at each other. "How do you feel?" said I.

"Fine," said she. "Have you a fever?"

"Fever? Not a bit," said I. "But I've been thinking. It's the tenth, and I absolutely must be in Paris by the twentieth. It's most important—a business matter. So I don't think I'd better go on with you into the Merdite country. I think I'd better go back to Scutari and catch the boat from Durazzo next Tuesday."

"But you can't get out of these mountains alone!" said she. "It's a hundred and fifty miles, and you don't know the trails nor the language."

"Oh, yes, I can," I said. "Don't talk nonsense, Alex dear."

"Well, you know what it is. It is up to you," said she. "Only, if you do get ill, you realize it is dangerous to try to make it, in this weather."

"If I get ill it strikes me it would be equally dangerous to stay here," I replied. "And I must be in Paris, on the job, by the twentieth."

"Well, if it's the job——" said she, and called Perolli.

Perolli was deep in politics, and paused only for a moment to say that if he had any authority over me he would not listen for a moment to such a mad notion. I told him, however, that he hadn't, and asked him to get me a guide. He said he did not know the men here, but would do his best, and by the time I was dressed he brought the guide, a slim, handsome youth who spoke Italian and swore to get me to Scutari in two days.

Betsy said that if I insisted on going, I must take Rexh with me, and I said I would not dream of it; I would not think of letting that twelve-year-old give up the trip into the farther mountains. All along the way he had thought of little else, and half his sentences had begun, "When we get into the Merdite country." Everything moved with incredible slowness, and eternities passed before I cut short the interminable formalities of farewell and plunged out into the cool, delightful rain on my way back to Scutari.

(To be concluded.)

Three Asses in the Pyrenees

A JOYOUS JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE.

Recently returned from a big game expedition to Central Africa, utterly bored with the "everything-supplied-by-the-stores" atmosphere that surrounds the modern traveller, the Author yearned to test his wife's theory that romance and adventure still linger in the by-ways of old Europe for those who seek them diligently. Her idea was to go on tramp with a donkey-cart, camping out at night, and avoiding all such latter-day luxuries as hotels, trains, and motor-cars. Finally Mr. Walmsley came to us, and we commissioned him, with his wife and the donkey, to wander through the Pyrenees, writing up his experiences exclusively for THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE.

By Leo Walmsley
M.C., F.R.G.S

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

VII.

WITH a frightful picture in my mind of what might happen—of what already might have happened—I raced down the road. The lightning was quickly followed by a deafening thunder-clap, and it was not until the last echo had died away and I had run a hundred yards that I heard the rattling of the cart, and Billy's voice shouting to Blanchette to "whoa." The fog was so dense and dark now I could scarcely see the road at my feet.

I was gaining, however. Billy had evidently reached the seat and put the brake on.

"Coming," I yelled to her. "Coming!"

A second flash of lightning seemed to hit me in the face, and simultaneously came the thunder—not a peal, but one ear-splitting explosion.

I staggered against the rocky near bank, regained my balance, and ran on.

The road made a sudden curve to the left. I found myself within a foot of the precipice and paused—sick with fear.

Had the cart——

Heavens! No; I dared not contemplate it.

It must have gone on—yet I could hear no sound!

I ran—I leapt onwards, rounded the curve. . . .

And then, with an impact that nearly drove my chest in, I collided with the back of the trap, which was standing stockstill in the middle of the road.

"Billy," I gasped, stumbling on to my knees.

"I'm here," came a voice from the fog, and next moment my arms were about her.

The psychology of fear and shock is a queer thing.

I spent the next two minutes giving Billy the upbraiding of her life—not because she had nearly scared me to death, but because, in folding her arms about me, she had stuck her finger in my eye! The fact that the rain was now coming down in sheets made no difference whatever. We didn't seem to notice it.

After a while we pulled Blanchette and the cart well in to the safe side of the road, unpacked the tent, and wrapped it round us, tying a waterproof sheet over our ass's steaming, trembling flanks. The storm continued for an hour, although, curiously enough, there was no more thunder. It rained, however, in torrents, and the wind at times reached hurricane strength.

We must have presented a sorry spectacle, huddled there against the rock wall, Blanchette with her hindquarters turned against the wind, her body seemingly frozen still with despair, her head bent down towards the ground, and a most woe-begone expression in her eyes; us with the dripping tent swathed round us, and strings and ropes cracking and flapping in the wind.

It was nearly five when the wind moderated and the rain ceased, and then followed a perceptible thinning in the consistency of the fog. I proposed that we should start back for Eaux-Bonnes.

Billy, however, would have none of it. She hated the place, she hated the people; and since I had been such a fool as to talk so freely and immodestly of our expedition, she would rather spend a week on the mountain-top than face so ignominious a return. It was in vain I protested that the storm had interfered with my plans; that there wasn't as much as a fowl-house between us and Arrens (twenty-four kilometres distant); that I wasn't thinking of myself but of her and Blanchette.

"*We're* all right," she answered, on behalf of the feminine personnel of the party. "Let us get on while the going's good. We've got a tent, matches, plenty of food—what more could you ask for?"

I could have suggested several items, one of them a bottle of whisky. But I held my peace.

Blanchette was certainly pleased to start, for the cold was penetrating her vitals. She covered the first stretch at a pace that set us gasping for breath, and would not have slowed down then had not the road suddenly grown steeper.

The fog still hung tenaciously. It exasperated us to think what a fine view it hid. For all we could see we might have been driving along the Hammersmith Road in a London "particular."

We plodded on, and up, for another hour, and then a survey-mark, let into the rock bank, informed us that we had reached a height of nearly five thousand feet. A few minutes later we heard the elfin tinkle of sheep bells, and the steep right-hand bank fell away into a rolling sward.

"The top!" I yelled, exultantly. "At last!"

It was *not* the top, but as a view-point for the spectacular drama which was now to be presented to us the summit of the Pic du Midi could not have bettered it. We halted, and had no sooner set the brake hard fast, as a precaution against any possible repetition of Blanchette's previous adventure, than the fog, with startling suddenness, began to dissolve. We had first a glimpse of pale green above us, and the round summit of the Col stood clear against the sea-blue sky. The green brightened to a cloth of emerald, of velvet smoothness, which as it sloped downwards became blotted with patches of brown heath, and the sombre shadows of rocks.

Soon we could see the valley, with its black pine forests, through which the river gleamed like a vein of silver, the oak woods of gayer tone, the hedged pastures, maize fields, and ripened corn, farmsteads, the white walls of Eaux-Bonnes. All these were revealed in turn, as by a showman well aware of their exact artistic quality.

The summit of the Col was still a good half-mile away, but we climbed to it swiftly. Here, on the other side, was a view as fine as the first; below, on our left, an immense *cirque* or escarpment and the basin of a river shut in from the plains by a barrier of mountains, which running to the south to join the main chain, and the Mt. Du Laid on our immediate right, formed a gradually descending succession of plateaux and slopes down which the road meandered to the distant valley of Arrens.

Here we met the first human being we had seen since leaving Eaux-Bonnes—a peasant with three pack donkeys. He stopped and looked at us with manifest astonishment.

"You have climbed up here—with *that?*" he cried, pointing to Blanchette.

"But truly," I answered coolly. "And why not?"

"But—but—with the *voiture?* It is impossible! One cannot believe it."

"You don't think I dragged it up, then?" I replied, tartly. "I tell you that is an ass—of accomplishment. A hill like this is but a morning's stroll to her. Poof!—your mountain donkeys—our Blanchette would carry all three of them in the cart, and never notice the weight."

He made no answer to that, but seized Blanchette by the muzzle and tried to look at her teeth. Resentful of this unwarranted lack of courtesy, she very rightly bit him, harder, in truth, than she ever bit me.

"*Ow!*" he cried. "She is a devil—but I will purchase her for five hundred francs. For the breeding she would be excellent."

It was not a very nice thing to say in front of a lady of Blanchette's years. She made an excellent effort to reprove him by stamping on his foot. Then she started off.

"You will sell her for five hundred francs?" he cried, skipping aside.

"Not for any price," I answered.

A minute later he had disappeared over the hill-top towards Eaux-Bonnes, while we were on our way down the opposite slope. There was a copse a few hundred yards away which offered protection for our camp, and as the clouds were starting to roll over the mountains on the other side of the valley like giant ocean breakers and the wind was freshening, I was anxious to reach it without a moment's delay.

We hadn't gone half way, however, before we heard a brisk clattering behind us, and there was one of the pack donkeys galloping down.

Blanchette scented him and, stopping, glanced back. He was a handsome-looking male ass. He came right up and rubbed his nose against Blanchette, who returned the compliment by a gentle play of teeth. The stranger was evidently to her liking.

"Shoo!" I said to our visitor, smiting him with my stick and driving him round. "Shoo!"—and to Blanchette, in stern tones—"*Allez, allez!*"

She did not heed me, and the stranger having moved out of range of my stick, came to a standstill once more. I made a rush at him. He ran—but stopped as soon as I did.

"Here's the man coming," Billy cried.

"We must have presented a sorry spectacle, huddled there against the rock wall."

Our friend was running down the road, and he was soon within speaking distance.

"Pray to drive my ass forward," he cried angrily. "Do you not see how I am being inconvenienced? I would reach Eaux-Bonnes before nightfall. Drive him, if you please."

He was the worst-mannered Frenchman I had yet encountered, but as our interest in the straying ass was a mutual one, I assisted him as best I could by throwing stones at it. One of these, however, caught the owner sharply on the knee-cap, and he begged me to desist.

At last he successfully drove the brute ahead of him, and to my relief the pair soon disappeared over the hill. Blanchette, making no effort to conceal her disappointment, slowly ambled on.

"Well, that's that," I murmured, thankfully. "Now we sha'n't be long." But we hadn't gone another fifty yards before that confounded donkey appeared again, galloping helter skelter down the road, its owner hot and blasphemous in pursuit. Blanchette was delighted and egged the miscreant onwards with a raucous bray that made the mountains echo.

"*Allez, allez!*" I shouted angrily at her, at the same time throwing a stone at the other one. "*Allez!*"

For answer, she turned round swiftly, and catching sight of her friend, made a rush

towards him. In vain I beat her, in vain I jammed the brake hard on and threw my whole weight and strength against the cart. Finally, I let her go and shouted at the peasant :—

"Pray to drive your ass forwards. It is most inconvenient! Drive her, if you please."

"Then take your own ass away," he answered angrily. "Do you not see that she is causing the misfortune? Why do you not proceed with her? Is she not amenable to the stick?"

I assured him that among Blanchette's many qualities I had never noticed that one. She would climb a hill, drag a load, bray, or kick with any ass in Europe, but when it came to amenability to chastisement—well, it wasn't in her.

"Drive your ass away," I said. "I will hold mine until you are beyond the hill,"

While I hung on desperately to Blanchette's head, the peasant did so, and once more we saw them disappear from sight. Very unwillingly Blanchette proceeded.

By this time the clouds had covered the *cirque*, and the Mt. Du Laid was half smothered in a secondary stratum of vapour.

"We've got to hurry," I said anxiously. "We'll be in the thick of it in half an hour."

We reached the copse and found a comparatively clear patch among the trees, large enough for the tent. I bundled the latter off the cart, and had got it half unpacked when I heard the clatter of hoofs once more.

"Oh, darling," shouted Billy, "that brute's here again! Quick, quick—I can't hold her!"

Blanchette was off like a fire engine, Billy hanging desperately to the reins. I picked up a stone as large as a cocoanut and ran after them.

"Leave her to me," I yelled, catching them up and savagely grabbing the bridle. "I'll settle this once and for all."

Blanchette recognized the determination in my voice, and quietly submitted when I moored her to a tree trunk. Then I flung the stone with all my might at the other donkey's hind-quarters and chased it to the top of the hill, over which its master's figure presently made a third appearance.

I forget what I said to him, but it was to the point. I also forget what he answered, but I know it was ill-mannered. Then he tried to catch his ass, but missed it, and it went tearing over the hill in front of him.

As for me, I ran back and feverishly continued the preparation of our camp.

Before the tent was up, however, the fog had settled down, and with it came an end to daylight. I staggered drunkenly through the copse looking for firewood. Luckily this was abundant, and although wet to all outward appearances, I had little doubt of its burning qualities once we got a fire started. I dragged down to the camp the best part of three trees.

"Poor darling," Billy cried, "you *must* be tired! Let me light the fire. I'll soon get it going, and then we'll have a jolly old meal. What about Blanchette?"

She was still out on the road, of course. I rested while my wife got the fire alight, with the help of our last box and a sheaf of newspaper; and then I went down to her. The cart I decided to leave where it was, and among the trees near the tent I found a beautifully-sheltered spot for Blanchette. I tied a blanket upon her back and then a waterproof sheet, and, having given her a bushel of oats, tethered her to a tree-trunk by a dozen yards of rope.

"Good old Blanchette," I cried affectionately, as I left her.

The fire was now blazing grandly, the fog making a golden aura of its light.

"Fine!" I murmured, catching the scent of frying bacon and eggs. "Six thousand feet above sea-level, and here we are as comfy as though we were in the Ritz! Did you notice the snow-fields below us before the fog came on? What a view that was! (Three eggs, darling, please.) Isn't Blanchette a wonder? . . . That funny old peasant and his love-sick ass! I wonder if they've reached Eaux-Bonnes yet?"

My mouth waters when I think of that meal. Sardines on toast (made to perfection on the red-hot embers), bacon and superbly frizzled eggs, potatoes roasted in their jackets, and *café-au-lait* such as Frenchmen never dreamed of.

We ate it sitting on the blankets in the tent, with the flaps rolled back to give the firelight full play, and when we had finished I flung log after log upon the blaze until the flame leapt up ten feet or more.

For once we were too tired to sing. We lay back on our pillows and talked about the events of the day.

An hour later rain started to fall on the tent roof, and the fog became so thick that we could scarcely see one another. But what did it matter? The wind had died away completely, and so perfect was our little tent, so dry and soft and warm our blankets, that we would not have changed our caravan even for a king's palace.

"Billy," I murmured sleepily, "you haven't any premonitions or intuitions to-night, have you?"

"Not one, darling," she answered, taking off her wet shoes, and absent-mindedly throwing one of them on to my face. I removed it and asked her to put the other one somewhere else.

"I'm simply dying for sleep," she continued. "I've never felt so scrumptiously tired in my life. . . . *Ooh! what's that?*"

She jumped up. I followed.

From the road came the unmistakable clatter of hoofs—and then a terrific hee-haw.

"That rope caught me just behind the knees and swept me over with a crash."

"Good heavens!" I shouted, feeling for the lamp. "It's that blank blank donkey. I'll—I'll *kill* him!"

I found the lamp and, slipping on my shoes and Burberry, staggered out.

"Oh, don't be silly!" my wife said. "Leave it alone. It can't do any harm. You'll kill yourself in the fog. Come back—do!"

I am by nature a person of very strong

will. Certain of my friends say this is obstinacy; but that is because they have not the gift of psychological analysis. I hate to be beaten. When I say a thing shall be—usually it is.

Now this infernal philandering donkey had annoyed me. It had already succeeded in making me look ridiculous, and if there is a thing I abominate more than defeat it is ridicule. Once and for all I would drive it back. I would show it clearly, and Blanchette, too, that I would not tolerate any more of this absurd nonsense.

Blanchette had already proclaimed her presence and her pleasure at the anticipated reunion by a soulful bray. Treading very carefully, for the electric lamp scarcely penetrated more than half-a-dozen feet of fog, I made my way towards the intruder, the stick grasped in my hand. The clattering of hoofs continued for a brief span and then a softer thud, thud, and the breaking of branches told me that the brute was losing no time in reaching Blanchette.

I shouted at it—swore, in fact—but it came on with unabashed persistence.

It was in a little glade that I had tethered Blanchette, and the tree to which she was secured was in the centre of it. I found her with the rope stretched taut in the direction of the on-coming ass. She glared at me angrily and pawed the ground.

"Look here," I shouted, seizing the halter. "It won't do, Blanchette. Get back. Get back."

She promptly lashed out with her hind legs, but I was far too practised to be caught that way. I smote her; then I made a lunge at the head of the other ass, which now stood with shining eyes, not a yard away. It avoided me and slowly moved higher up the glade, Blanchette following as well as the rope would permit. I ducked under the line and made a second attack, whereupon the donkey repeated his previous manœuvre. I stopped and decided to employ more subtle methods. . . I waited motionless, and when at last, lulled into a false sense of security, the newcomer moved forward, I turned the lamplight on it and struck with all my might.

What happened then is not very clear. The stick got home; I remember that well. The animal bolted—that, too, I recall—but in what direction I do *not* know, for Blanchette, striving to follow him, set off in a bounding gallop in the only way open to her—a circle, with the tree its centre, and its radius the rope. That rope caught me just behind the knees and swept me over with a crash. The lamp went out. I yelled and swore as I grovelled about, trying to find it again, but Blanchette completely ignored me.

Persisting in her futile effort to reach that wretched lover of hers, she galloped round and round until, just as I was getting to my feet, the rope caught me again and sent me flying.

It was a joy wheel, with the joy cut out and the movement reversed, for at each circuit of the tree the line grew shorter, until at last Blanchette had wound herself close up to the trunk. Then at last she paused, panting and snorting like a steam engine, and started to reverse.

Quickly I staggered to my feet, and with a tremendous effort threw myself out of that vicious circle. Then I sat down again on the wet grass to recover.

Meanwhile Billy was shouting anxiously. What had happened? Why didn't I come? Had the lamp failed? She couldn't see me. She was trying to find me. Why didn't I answer?

"It's all right, darling," I replied. "I just tripped, you know. Yes; the lamp went out. Blanchette is restless—very restless. Don't come. I'll be with you at once."

I got up again and, judging the direction by her voice—I could not even see the fire—I moved back. Blanchette had stopped, but I heard the sound of her hoarse breathing at the opposite side of the glade. I heard, too, the sound of another donkey breathing. The wretch had not bolted after all, then! Judging by the sounds, the pair of them were even now rubbing noses.

I stumbled against a stone, felt for it, and picked it up. It was a beauty. I threw it with all my remaining strength at where I presumed the two asses to be.

The acoustic properties of fog, however, are not to be relied upon. A fearful crash followed—the crash of breaking crockery—and then a wild shriek from Billy.

"Oh! *what* are you doing? You've smashed all the cups and nearly killed me! Oh, *do* come back. You're——"

I suppose I was, but there was no need for Billy to tell me. I reached her at last, crept into the tent, and flung off my dripping things.

We chatted for awhile, but Billy did most of the talking. Then I lay back on the banjo case and closed my eyes. Somehow or other I felt quite tired.

(*To be concluded.*)

Johnston and a flock of young white pelicans on Pelican Island.

OUR TRIP TO THE BIRD ISLANDS

The Story of a Perilous Journey

BY

JOHN EDWIN HOGG

Another absorbing article from our indefatigable Californian contributor. Some time ago we published a brief description of Mr. Hogg's remarkable voyage across the Salton Sea, that strange body of salt water in the heart of the sun-scorched Colorado Desert. We have now persuaded him to write for us his own account of this nerve-trying experience which, with the wonderful photographs taken on the trip, is here presented. In view of what happened it is a miracle, as Mr. Hogg points out, that he and his companion are alive and well to-day.

AN aeroplane trip from the mouth of the Colorado River, in Mexico, to Los Angeles, a distance of approximately three hundred miles, was the beginning of my Salton Sea* adventures. As I look back upon it now, the memory of that experience, with death from heat-prostration, thirst, or drowning, staring us in the face for hours that seemed like weeks, appears to be some horrible nightmare. The miracle of it all is that we are both safe and sound to-day and that I am able to write these lines.

The affair came about in this fashion: When the United States entered the World War, I enlisted as an aeronautical photographer, received a thorough course of training, and later saw several months of active service. When the war was over and I returned to civil life, I sought to put to practical use the knowledge I had gained. I bought an aeroplane and began to commercialize the innumerable industrial uses of aeronautical photography. In a few months' time I managed to develop quite a prosperous business enterprise. It was in this line of endeavour that I was called upon by La Compania de Aqua y Terranos de Baja California (The Water and Land Company of Lower California) of Mexicali, Lower California, Mexico, to do certain aeronautical photographic

* With the exception of the Dead Sea in Palestine, the Salton Sea is the lowest body of water on earth, two hundred and sixty feet below sea level and in summer a veritable inferno. It is located in the midst of the Colorado Desert, in Southern California.

A picture taken by the Author from his aeroplane while diving down over the islands. Note the flocks of birds disturbed by the approach of the 'plane.

work for them in the early summer of 1921.

My work finished, I was ready to wing my way home. On the trip by aeroplane from Los Angeles to the frontier I had flown down the sea coast to Tia Juana, Mexico; and thence over the jagged mountains of the coast range into the reclaimed desert valleys beyond. In returning I decided to fly home by a different route in order to avoid the dangerous journey over the maze of towering mountain peaks. I planned to go straight north through the Imperial Valley, where I would have good emergency landing-grounds under me for a distance of fully a hundred miles. I would have to take my chance in flying over the Salton Sea, but a forced landing in the water near the shore appeared a lesser evil than crashing the plane on top of a mountain. Once safely over the Salton Sea, I would have the cultivated Coachella Valley, with good landing fields for another hundred miles. Beyond the Coachella Valley great snow-clad mountains towering up to elevations of nearly twelve thousand feet would lie in my path, but I intended to fly through the San Gorgonio Pass, a narrow crack with a ground elevation at the base of only about four thousand feet. Once through the pass, I would have easy going over fairly level cultivated country for the remainder of the three-hundred-mile flight.

With this route decided upon, I loaded the plane with fuel on the military aviation field at Mexicali, shook hands with Governor Ybarra, the *jefe politico* of the Mexican State of Lower California, and rose into the air. The heat in the below-sea-level valley was terrific. A thermometer in one of the hangars on the aviation field showed 130 degrees Fahrenheit as I stowed my leather flying-kit into the cockpit of the plane and climbed in in my shirt sleeves. It was too hot to wear even a helmet, and I would have dispensed with my goggles if it had been possible. No sooner was the plane in the air than I pointed her nose northward, and with the motor roaring out its steady drone, pulled the "stick" back and began climbing. My sole thought at that moment was to reach an elevation where I could get comfortably cool. There was virtually no change in the temperature until my altimeter showed that I had reached six thousand feet, but at eight thousand the air became endurable. I could see the surface of the Salton Sea glistening in the sunlight in the distance, and pointed the nose of the plane toward it.

A strong wind was blowing northward through the valley, boosting me along at a great rate. The plane was good for about seventy-five miles an hour in still air, and with the breeze "on her tail," I was roaring along through space at something better than a hundred miles per hour. The shadow of the plane on the ground below crossed sixty-acre fields at a single leap, and it was no time at all before I was over the edge of the glassy Salton Sea. I looked at my chronometer and was delighted to note that I had covered a hundred miles in exactly fifty minutes. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when I took the air at Mexicali, and at the rate I was moving I looked forward to being home in ample time for supper with my wife.

The view that I commanded from my lofty point of vantage was grand beyond all description. I could see fully a hundred miles in every direction, with the snow-clad mountains on my left and the grey, forbidding-looking desert on the right. Just to the south lay the bluish-green cultivated fields of the Imperial Valley and directly under me was the Salton Sea, with its surface two hundred and sixty feet below ocean level. It looked as blue as indigo as I peered down into it, and as it shimmered in the sunlight it reminded me of a mirror sixty miles long and twenty miles wide. The various volcanic islands in this great inland sea of the desert stood out like nuts

studding the icing of an enormous cake. I was able to pick out Mullet Island, upon which dwells Captain Charles E. Davis, the picturesque seafaring man who has developed the valuable fishing industry of the Salton Sea and with whom I had hunted ducks only a few months before. Peering over the side of the cockpit, looking down upon the sea, I noticed several very large islands near the south-western shore. Some phenomenon that I was utterly unable to account for gave them the appearance of having been recently visited by a heavy snowfall. Snow being quite out of the question in such temperatures and utterly unknown at the Salton Sea, my curiosity was aroused to know what the white substance was that covered the islands.

Accordingly, I cut off the motor and began spiralling down. By the time I had descended two thousand five hundred feet I saw that the "white substance" on the islands was birds—literally millions of white pelicans, seagulls, terns, cormorants, and other varieties of waterfowl. "Why do they congregate there?" I asked myself, and to further satisfy my curiosity I dropped lower and lower. By the time I got down to within a thousand feet of the island I was able to see that the islands were vast rookeries; the birds were nesting there! "What a splendid subject for an article!" I thought.

I dropped lower and lower, until, when I was only about five hundred feet above the surface of the sea, the birds took fright and winged their way off in every direction. I circled around the islands several times looking for a possible aeroplane landing, with the view of returning to the islands some day with a camera and notebook. There was no place to land however. The islands were too rocky or too sandy, and the mainland shore, no great distance away, consisted either of bog or shifting sand-dunes. There was no chance to land a plane anywhere in the vicinity of the islands without crashing it, so I pulled back the "stick," opened the motor to its full power, and began climbing upward again. As I rose I turned over in my mind the idea of visiting the islands while the birds were still nesting. Business was none too plentiful in the field of aeronautical photography, and with one big job just completed there was no telling when I would be able to land another one. "Meanwhile," I thought, "I may as well come down here and make a little money by writing the story of those bird rookeries."

By this time I had reached an elevation of about fifteen hundred feet above the surface of the sea, and without any definite plan as to where I expected to alight, I headed across the sea for Captain Davis's place. I had in mind a piece of flat hard ground on the mainland just a little distance behind his island. If I could land the plane there, I thought, I would call on the old Captain to see if I could arrange with him to take me to the bird islands in his motor-boat.

A few minutes later I had crossed the sea and dropped down over the roof of Captain Davis's house. The familiar figure of the Captain himself immediately appeared on

"Hell's Kitchen," Captain Davis's appropriately-named house on Mullet Island. It stands on the summit of a live volcano, and is constantly shaken by violent earthquakes.

the rocks outside his door, his face tilted upward. The drone of the plane had evidently fetched him out, for in his isolated little home on the island two hundred feet below sea level—which he calls "Hell's Kitchen," because of its negative elevation and the fact that it stands on top of a live volcano—aerial visitors do not "drop in" every day.

True to my hopes, I found that I could land on the flat ground of the mainland behind the Captain's island, and in another minute after sailing over the old fisherman's roof I had brought the plane around with her nose into the wind and had set her down. I had scarcely rolled to a standstill before the Captain had cranked up his "flivver" and was speeding across the little bridge which connects his island with the mainland. As he came up alongside the aeroplane it took but a moment for us to exchange greetings. He was surprised, of course, to learn the identity of his aerial visitor.

Meanwhile I had noticed that Davis appeared unusually pale under his heavy coat of sun-tan. He seemed nervous, too; and then my eye fell upon a blood-stained bandage on his left hand and a piece of wire bound tightly around the wrist.

"Good gracious, Captain!" I exclaimed. "What's happened to you?"

In a faltering voice the Captain explained that just a minute before he heard my aeroplane he had been dressing some fish when his knife slipped, severing the artery in his wrist. "I was bleeding to death," he said, "when I got this piece of wire and managed to stop the blood, but I can't take it off. If I do the blood spurts something awful."

"Where's the nearest doctor?" I asked.

"Brawley," he replied feebly.

"Brawley is twenty-seven miles from here," I thought, "and over these miserable roads it would take an hour to make the trip by automobile; a plane could do it in twenty minutes."

The Captain was obviously in dire need of medical attention, and having found him alone in this condition it was "up to me" to see that he got it with all possible speed.

"Get into the front cockpit of my aeroplane, Captain," I commanded, "and I'll have you to a doctor in a jiffy!" He had probably never been in the air before, and I expected him to hesitate about getting into the craft; but he didn't.

The Captain was no more than in the cockpit before he lost consciousness and collapsed in a heap. I buckled the life-belt over him and in another minute we were in the air heading down the Imperial Valley in the direction of Brawley. We made the trip in just nineteen minutes. I found a barley field outside the town from which the grain had been removed and dropped the plane into it. Two farmers travelling along the nearby road with an automobile immediately drew up alongside the field and came out to look the plane over. I had little difficulty in enlisting their aid to transfer the unconscious Captain to their automobile and rush him to the Brawley hospital. There, an hour later, after treatment,

Mud volcanoes near the Salton Sea. They spout steam and boiling mud, and are dangerous to approach.

Boiling springs on one of the islands. The Author's helmet gives one some idea of the size of the bubbles.

Captain Davis opened his eyes and looked hazily about him.

"Hello, John! What are you doing here?" he asked me.

"I brought you here in my aeroplane, Captain," I told him. "You were hurt when I dropped in at your place, and I flew down here with you to get you to a doctor as fast as I could."

"Oh, yes; I remember," said the Captain. "I cut my wrist, and was bleeding to death when you came flying over my house. I remember talking with you after you landed out on the flat, but I don't remember coming to Brawley. If I'd known, you would never have got me into the flying machine; I'm skeered of 'em! I reckon, though, as how you're gettin' me here quick has saved my skin, so I'm thankful to you for that."

To this I replied: "Well, Captain, I didn't do anything for you that I would not have done for any fellow-creature in distress. I am glad to have been able to help you out in such a pinch."

"Well, now," answered the Captain, "you don't need to be so modest about it! You've saved my life, and some day I hope I'll be able to do something to repay you. If ever you want anything around my place just holler for it, and you'll get it, if it's anything I can do for you."

Little did I realize then how the old Captain's words would be backed up by deeds only a few weeks hence! Had I known it, I should probably never have gone near the Salton Sea again and there would have been no occasion for my relating this story.

After Captain Davis had rallied, I told him why I had flown to Mullet Island. "There! I knew it!" he cried. "Those birds bring me luck! I've protected them as best I could, and I've been trying to get the Government to make the islands a Federal game refuge. Now I've got those birds to thank for sending you to save my life."

I told him of my plan to visit the islands to photograph the birds, hoping to make arrangements for the use of his boat.

"Very well," replied the Captain. "If you wanted to go there to harm one single feather of them, I'd say 'nothin' doin',' in spite of what you've done for me. But since you only want to take pictures of them, just name the day, and me an' my boat are at your service. The young birds'll be hatchin' out in about another month, and that would be the best time for you to get over there. You just go ahead an' make your plans. Let me know when you want to go and I'll be ready."

I left the Captain at the hospital after telling him that I would let him hear from me with regard to the trip after my return to Los Angeles. He had many friends in Brawley, several of whom volunteered to see him safely to his home after he had fully recovered from his injury. A few minutes later I was in the air again, heading the plane toward the crack between the snow-clad mountains that I knew to be the San Gorgonio Pass. Within two hours I was

home, somewhat late on my schedule, but nevertheless happy because of the service I had been able to render to Captain Davis.

A few days afterwards I wrote to Davis telling him that I planned to visit the islands in two weeks' time if that date would be agreeable to him. If anything prevented him going to the islands at that date he was to wire me at once, otherwise I should consider the date fixed.

The two weeks elapsed and I heard nothing from the Captain, so I decided that everything was "O.K." and got ready to start for the Salton Sea. I did not plan to go alone. My friend, Philip Johnston, who had been my companion on numerous exciting trips, was anxious to go along. He was on holiday and was just the type of companion desirable for such a strenuous journey.

With our plans all carefully made we set out from Los Angeles, travelling with two motor-cycles and sidecars. We should have made the trip by aeroplane, but for reasons of economy chose the cheaper method of transport. The journey was uneventful, except for the fact that we suffered considerably from the climatic changes we encountered. Leaving the temperate seacoast country, the first leg of the journey took us into the cooler climate of the high elevations in the mountains. From this region, where overcoats and heavy clothing were desirable, we dropped down the east side of the San Gorgonio Pass into the torrid Coachella Valley, some hundred and fifty feet below sea level. As we travelled on the heat became more intense, until at the Salton Sea we were down two hundred and sixty feet below sea level and sweltering under a temperature of a hundred and thirty degrees Fahrenheit. Arriving at Mullet Island about two o'clock in the afternoon, tired from the long trip across the desert and well-nigh wilted from the heat, we received information that nearly took the heart out of us, and which started us off upon a series of hair-breadth adventures that we had never in the least anticipated.

As we rattled across the little home-made plank bridge which connects Captain Davis's island with the mainland, we were greeted by "Shorty" Bell, one of the Captain's fishermen. I had become acquainted with Mr. Bell while on my previous water-fowl hunting trip with Captain Davis, and after shaking hands with him my first question was as to the whereabouts of the Captain.

"Captain Davis is over on Pelican Island," replied the fisherman. "He's been there for the last two weeks. He's got the *Pirate* (one of the Captain's motor boats) in dry dock there and is busy overhauling her. Your letter has been with a big pile of mail waiting for him since about two days after he went to the island."

This information seemingly toppled all our carefully-laid plans to earth. We had spent two days making the trip to Mullet Island, and had travelled two hundred and seventy-five miles only to find ourselves literally at the end of a blind trail. Captain Davis had the only two motor-boats on the Salton Sea, and without boats our trip to the bird islands appeared impossible. Knowing that it was eighteen miles across the Sea to Pelican Island I questioned Bell as to the possibility of our getting one of the Captain's skiffs and rowing to the island.

"We haven't even got a skiff," the fisherman replied. "We only had three and Captain Davis took them all in tow of the *Salton* (his other motor boat) to haul his supplies to the island. The Captain isn't due back here for another week, and there is no way of getting him back until he is ready to come."

Here was a facer indeed! Our whole beautifully-planned scheme had apparently fallen to pieces. Johnston was so disappointed and disgusted that he was ready to turn round and drive back home, but I refused to give up hope. There seemed to be only one solution to our difficulty—to reach Pelican Island somehow or other and get in touch with Captain Davis. If that could be done our plans might be successful; otherwise we were doomed to utter failure. But how on earth were we to get to Pelican Island?

At last, as I stood there thinking hard, an inspiration came to me which smacked highly of adventure if not entirely of logic. "Phil," I said to Johnston, "I've got an idea that I believe will save the day for us if you're not afraid to try it. My plan is to take the bodies of the sidecars and caulk them with pitch so they won't leak. Then we can use them as canoes in which to paddle to Pelican Island. If you've the courage to try it we'll either get to the island or drown in the attempt."

At this suggestion Johnston's eyes beamed like those of a small boy presented with a stick of candy. "You know me, John," he replied. "I'm not a quitter. If you're ready to cross the Salton Sea in a tin bath-tub, I'll go with you."

We shook hands and the plan was agreed upon.

"Shorty" Bell, who had been listening to the conversation, muttered something about some fellows having more pluck than brains, but at our request he adjourned to Captain Davis's paint locker and brought out a can of pitch and a brush.

A few minutes later we had the bodies off the two sidecars and were carefully sealing seams and caulking bolt-holes with strips of cotton saturated with the pitch. As we worked "Shorty" Bell looked on and helped us as best he could, muttering all the while that he thought we were crazy. Undeterred by the fisherman's misgivings we went on with our work, and by sundown had the job

of sealing the sidecar bodies completed to our satisfaction. "Shorty" meanwhile had further accommodated us by digging up two old oars. Cutting off the handles, he whittled them down into serviceable paddles.

Attempting to cross the sea after sundown would have been foolhardy in the extreme, and because of this, and in order to allow time for the pitch to dry, we decided to spend the night with "Shorty" at Captain Davis's house and make our start at sunrise next morning. That evening, after a supper cooked in Captain Davis's kitchen, we sat in the tiny cabin discussing our plans. The conversation was interrupted every few minutes by violent earthquakes that threatened to shake the house down. The "quakes" became more violent as the evening wore on, until finally we got a jolt that flung all the dishes and pans off the kitchen shelves and sent us scurrying outside for safety. It was all over in a minute and we went inside again to pick up the fragments, but only to get another bump twenty minutes later which turned all the furniture over and smashed everything breakable that was not nailed down. After the last tremor "Shorty" declared he'd had enough to last him for the rest of the night, so he rolled up his bedding and moved out on the rocks at the highest point on the little volcanic island. Johnston and I decided that we preferred sleeping in the house, taking the chance of its being shaken down upon us. A "quake" that struck us about midnight overturned our cots and moved the house bodily about three inches on its foundations, but in spite of these disturbances, which occurred regularly about every half-hour, we managed to get a little rest.

The most serious problem in the way of our successful navigation of the Salton Sea in our improvised boats was the one of carrying sufficient drinking water to last us through the terrific heat until we reached the water casks of Captain Davis's camp on Pelican Island. The Salton Sea is about twice as salty as ocean water, and therefore utterly undrinkable. After launching our sidecar boats, we found that they floated nicely and were not quite so "cranky" to manipulate as we had anticipated. Most of the available cargo space in my "boat," however, was taken up with my indispensable camera and photographic equipment, and what little was left after the outfit had been packed was almost entirely sacrificed to the several inflated tyre tubes which we placed in the "boats" to give them buoyancy in the event of a spill. When we were ready to put to sea I had room for only a single two-gallon canteen of drinking water and a little package of food. Even with this limited equipment the little craft was pitifully overloaded when my weight was added to the cargo. Most of our water supply, therefore, had to be entrusted to Johnston, and we loaded eight six-quart canteens into his "boat" in addition to his hundred and eighty pounds of avoirdupois and half a dozen inflated motor tubes, four of which had been borrowed from Captain Davis's "flivver."

Johnston cruising between the islands in his sidecar-body "boat."

As we prepared to shove off, "Shorty" Bell maintained emphatically that we were two of the craziest fools he had ever met. Nevertheless, he wished us good luck, shook hands with us, and waved us on our way.

Getting started shortly after sunrise, we planned to make all the headway we could while we were still fresh for the task, before the terrific heat of the day set in. We had scarcely gone five hundred yards from the shore, however, before we realized that any sort of boat progress over the surface of the Salton Sea is a far more difficult proposition than the same progress would be in fresh water or in water of average salinity. The water of the Salton Sea is so heavy that an ordinary wind scarcely ripples the surface. It can "kick up quite a mess" in the

exceptionally high winds that occasionally sweep across the desert, but fortunately for us this particular day had dawned with scarcely a breath of air stirring, and the surface of the sea was like a huge pane of glass. There wasn't a ripple or wavelet on it, but that did not make the water any the less heavy and unyielding. It was almost like trying to paddle through molasses or oil.

After we had been paddling for an hour it seemed that the shore of Mullet Island had receded into the background just about half a mile. It may have been farther, but we were unable to tell because we had no means of accurately judging distance. Pelican Island, our goal, was somewhere over the horizon; we were not sure exactly where. We were merely steering for it by taking our bearings from one of the great snow-peaks of the western horizon, as "Shorty" Bell had told us to do. Meanwhile the sun had come well up above the horizon line of the desert to the eastward, and it had scarcely appeared before its rays began to beat down upon our backs with merciless fury. It felt as if a giant burning-glass had been focused upon us. The cowls of the sidecar bodies drew the heat until it seemed that our bare feet,

We could scarcely go ten minutes without a drink, and at the rate we were taking water from the canteens, it soon became apparent to me that we were due to run out of drinking water long before we got halfway to Pelican Island. With this realization I was almost tempted to turn back, but resolved to try a different scheme before I gave up and let the whole expedition terminate in failure. In order to keep as cool as possible and to improve our chance of being able to swim freely in the event of an upset, we had removed most of our clothing, only retaining our underwear and shirts to prevent the sun from blistering our skins. "Salton Sea may not be drinkable," I thought, "but it ought to be an available substitute for perspiration!" With this thought I dropped my paddle across the "gunwales" of my improvised boat long enough to splash myself thoroughly with sea-water. The cooling effect was really wonderful. I shouted this discovery to Phil, who was a few yards behind me, and for the next half-hour we were able to paddle along with less frequent incursions upon the precious contents of the canteens.

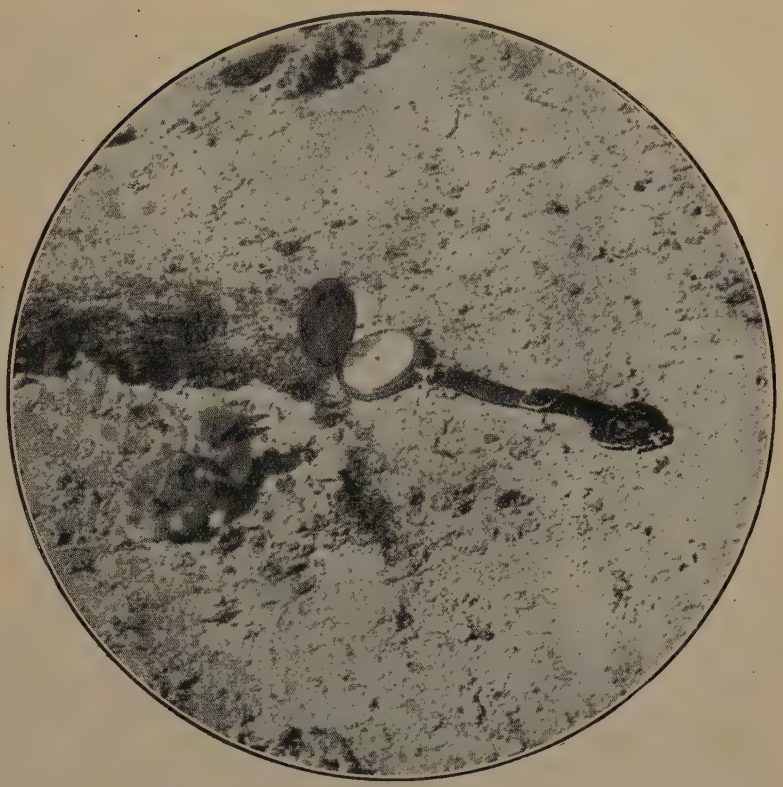
By this time the sun had reached such a high point in the heavens that the mirages

Pelicans rising at the approach of the Author. Note the eggs in the foreground.

tucked inside them, would be roasted. The perspiration trickled off us in streams, and we were compelled to make serious inroads upon our limited water supply to provide the moisture to create that perspiration. In such terrific heat there is only one way to sustain life in the human body, and that is to keep the perspiration flowing.

began to play. Mullet Island disappeared in a bank of silvery haze, which faded away into the desert mountains in the background until it was impossible for us to tell where the sea left off and the shore began. All around us there was nothing to be seen but the shimmering waves of heat rising from the surface of a glassy sea, and we could

detect no shore-line anywhere except the distant mountains, which seemed to be suspended in mid-air. With the dancing mirages all about us it looked as though the sea continued on under the mountains themselves. The irony of it all was that the great peaks to the westward were capped with snow. There were we, being literally roasted alive on the surface of that mirror-like sea, which seemed to us like a lake of heated oil, while tantalized with the view of snow in the distance. On the summit of those peaks, nearly twelve thousand feet above us, we knew that we should freeze to death almost as readily as we were roasting where we were.



A baby tern in its nest. The watch shows the comparative size.

Realization of the hazards of our journey was made all the more complete by the knowledge that if we got upset in the Salton Sea the only places on the shore where it would be possible for a human being to land safely were on Pelican Island, the bird islands beyond, or at Captain Davis's boat-landing on Mullet Island. The reason for this is that the slope of the desert round the shores of the Salton Sea is only about a foot to the mile for a long way back from the water's edge. This feature makes the entire shore-line, with the exception of a few isolated points, a bottomless bog of saline slime. A man swimming ashore from the sea would encounter this deadly stretch of slime and would be as helpless to cross it to solid ground as a house-fly on a sticky fly-paper.

Noon found us sweltering under the sun, fast becoming exhausted, and with our hands beginning to blister from the work at the paddles. The torture of the journey would not have seemed so bad if we had had any degree of knowledge as to our position. We had no way of knowing, however, whether we were nearer Mullet Island or Pelican. Our whereabouts, or the number of hours that it would take us to reach Pelican Island, were purely a matter of conjecture. We had been under way seven hours, and we estimated our speed at something like two miles per hour. By this method of calculation we should have covered fourteen miles, and had only four miles more to go to reach Pelican Island. This we knew to be a low, sandy stretch of land, and it was not probable that we should sight it until we got fairly close to it. Indeed, we faced a very unpromising prospect in the fact that we might miss the island altogether, for with the shimmering mirages all about us it was impossible to see more than two or three miles in any direction. If we *did* miss the island, some twenty-eight miles of open sea would lie between us and the dry land of Coachella Valley—a distance that we knew we should never live to accomplish. It seemed to us at that moment as if the Salton Sea were as boundless as the Pacific Ocean.

In order to conserve our waning strength for the paddles, we lashed the two floating sidecar bodies together while we rested and ate the lunches we had provided for the trip. After washing the meal down with a few teaspoonfuls of water each, we unleashed the two "boats" and swung at the paddles once more.

By one o'clock in the afternoon the heat

became even more terrible than it had been during the previous torrid hours. It seemed to me at times as if I were about to suffocate. The glare of the sun, too, was dreadful, and the reflection on the mirror-like surface of the sea seared my eyeballs until my vision became seriously impaired. A pair of smoked spectacles would have been worth their weight in gold at that moment.

About this time new freaks of the mirages began to play upon us to sap our waning strength and add further to our feeling of hopelessness. Off on the horizon, in the general direction of our goal, there suddenly appeared a beautiful island fringed with palms and overgrown with a rank growth of vegetation. I knew positively, from having flown over the Salton Sea by aeroplane, that no such island existed. We paddled on for half an hour, and then the "island" did just what we expected it to do—it simply vanished in the haze, leaving us once more struggling along over the surface of that seemingly interminable sea, tortured in body and mind and beginning to curse ourselves for our foolishness in ever having undertaken such a venture.

My reverie of self-condemnation was broken by having my worst fears realized as I heard a heavy splash behind me and looked around. There was Johnston swimming in the Salton Sea, with his sidecar body bottom side up—kept on the surface only by the inflated motor tubes within! The poor fellow's doom was apparently sealed, and I was as powerless to assist him as if I were already dead myself. Johnston's courage at that moment is a tribute to his character that will linger in my memory if I live to be a hundred years old. He knew that he was as good as drowned, but he faced his fate in silence.

I paddled alongside of him and succeeded in passing him one of the inflated motor tubes out of my "boat." This he adjusted about his waist to buoy him up so that he could relax his efforts in swimming. He attempted to speak, but was unable to do so until I had given him my canteen, from which he drained the last drop of water. With his mouth and throat moistened he was able to talk and, addressing me in a voice that was nothing more than a croaking whisper, he said: "Well, John, old man, I reckon it's curtains and solemn music for me. I'm as good as gone, so I may as well start filling myself with the Salton Sea right now; there's no sense in prolonging the agony."

I answered him quite angrily, telling him that I'd save him somehow or we would drown together. Then I set about attempts at rescue. The three empty canteens from my sidecar were placed under Johnston's upturned craft to give it additional buoyancy, and after we had salvaged three of the remaining canteens of water from the luggage compartment of his car, I took the overturned craft in tow, with Johnston hanging to the rear of it, kicking with his feet to aid our progress. With this dead weight and heavy resistance progress was more difficult and less hopeful than it had been before. The overturned sidecar dragged like a sea-anchor, and when I pulled at the paddle it seemed as if I were attempting to move every ounce of water in the Salton Sea.

By the time the sun had slipped down the western sky to a point that indicated mid-afternoon my efforts at the paddle had become terribly feeble. Furthermore, each stroke was accomplished with greater effort, until finally it took all the muscular energy and will-power I possessed to merely lift the paddle out of the water. I realized that our chances of ever reaching dry land were practically nil. Both of us, apparently, were doomed to death by drowning, heat-prostration, or thirst; and I began to speculate as to which of these fates would end our sufferings. Of this much I was certain—death in any form would be an almost welcome relief. Yet I knew that I didn't really want to die and I pulled doggedly on, though hope was fast fading.

With his body immersed Johnston suffered far less from thirst than I did. The cooling effect of the water and the absorption of a certain amount of it through his skin left him almost immune from the torture I was undergoing. Several times I offered him water from the dwindling contents of the canteens, but he declined it, saying that I had better drink it myself. I noticed, however, that when he refused he had to prime his parched mouth and throat with sea-water before he could get the words out.

My state of exhaustion had reached the point where it seemed that I could not lift the paddle for another stroke, when my eye fell upon something off toward the horizon. It looked as if it might be a tiny island, and yet it did not rise high enough above the surface of the sea to hold out any promise of being land. I gazed at it for a full minute and called Johnston's attention to it, but with his eyes so close to the water he declared he could see nothing but sea and mirage. Reaching for my field glasses under the cowl of the sidecar, I took a look at the object through them. "It may not be a sand bar," I thought, "though it looks like one, but at any rate it is worth investigating."

Eventually we got close enough to see what it was, and discovered that what we had thought might be dry land was only about an acre of floating sedge-grass. As we pulled up to it, however, our hopes soared again. Johnston relaxed his hold of his overturned craft and swam to the margin of the floating mass, and I shouted for joy as I saw him clamber on to it and realized

that the grass was sufficiently solid to support his weight.

A moment later I had pushed the nose of the sidecar up on to the floating islet and stepped out upon it. The cramped position of my limbs during the entire day had made them temporarily almost useless, and it was only with untold effort that I could get my stiff muscles to function to the point of letting me clamber out of my improvised "boat." When I finally succeeded, my legs collapsed under me and I sprawled full length upon the sedge grass, half immersed in the water which oozed up through it under the pressure of my weight. For fully ten minutes I stretched and rolled in the mixture of grass and water, so delighted with the temporary relief it gave me that I was almost oblivious to the pain that I was still suffering and the fact that our salvation was as yet by no means effected. Meanwhile Johnston had made a fairly thorough exploration of the islet. He discovered that he could walk on it so long as he kept moving; if he stood still the grass would pack down until the water came up round his waist. If he had stood in one place long enough he would undoubtedly have broken through, but he took good care to avoid such an accident.

After I had rested awhile we crawled around together and finally managed to pull his capsized sidecar up on to the islet. It was then a simple matter to launch it again right side up, and moor it to the margin of the grassy mass until we were ready to start on our voyage once more.

We rested on that floating grass-mat for fully half an hour. By that time we felt tremendously refreshed, and then, with Johnston once more paddling in his "boat," instead of dragging along as a deadweight behind me, our hopes rose so high that we felt fairly certain that we should eventually reach Pelican Island. So, taking our bearings from the great snow-capped peaks, near which the sun was now settling, we shoved off from our life-saving islet and paddled onwards once more.

The floating island had faded well into the distance, and the sun had dipped below the western peaks, when a tiny streak appeared on the horizon to send our spirits soaring with the hope that it was not only land but Pelican Island at that. A glance at it through the field glasses revealed that it was *actually* land, and we decided it must be the island we were seeking. I was staring at it through the glasses when Johnston suddenly spoke: "Listen!" he cried. "I believe I hear a motor boat!" We both cupped our blistered hands behind our ears and presently the faint "putt! putt! putty-putt! putt!" of an internal combustion engine came floating unmistakably across that silent glassy sea. "It must be Captain Davis!" I exclaimed. "As likely as not he has sighted us and is heading out here to pick us up!" The faint barking of the motor as we heard it at that moment was the sweetest music I have ever heard. If Captain Davis had really seen us it spelt salvation and the end of a day of horrors that had seemed like a month.

Captain Davis's motor-boat *Salton*.

For the next fifteen or twenty minutes we rested on our paddles, gazing in the direction whence came the sound. As we stared towards the horizon and nothing came into view we began to doubt the evidence of our sense of hearing. Perhaps Captain Davis had not seen us, and was running out to sea away from us? Doubts and fears were soon dispelled, however, by the appearance of a tiny black speck on the shimmering horizon. I gazed at this through the field glasses and presently made out the unmistakable shape of a boat. Even as I looked, the boat became two boats—and then three! Mystified, I handed the glasses to Johnston, who declared that he saw *two* boats. I was positive I had seen three, but when I took the glasses once

more I could only make out one. With this unaccountable apparition we began to doubt the evidence of our eyesight; we suspected that we were "seeing things," or that we were the victims of some cruel new prank of the mirage. The thought that it might be mirage, however, was unbelievable, because "mirage boats" don't go "putt! putt! putt!" Then, as the sounds of the motor-exhaust became more distinct, we realized that the presence of at least one boat was a reality and that the craft—thank Heaven!—was undoubtedly coming toward us.

Eventually the boat, or boats—whatever it was we had seen and heard—drew near enough for us to hear human voices above the sharp cracking of the exhaust. At first the voices were indistinct and unintelligible, but finally they became audible to the point of enabling us to recognize words. The first intelligible strand of conversation that we were able to overhear was in the voice of Captain Davis, saying: "Who in Hades do you reckon those fellows are? They look as if they were floating on a couple of logs!" Even in our exhausted condition Johnston and I were able to enjoy the humour of the incident.

A few minutes later the mystery as to the number of boats was cleared up, for we perceived that the craft we had first seen was the *Salton* with Captain Davis and "Slim" Clifford, one of the Captain's fishermen, on board. Behind the *Salton*, the *Pirate*, the boat they had been overhauling, was in tow, and behind the *Pirate* again was a barge that they had been using as a tender. It was the swinging about of the two boats in tow that had given us the vision of varying numbers.

Presently, the *Salton* was alongside, and as her engines were shut off, Captain Davis stood at the deck rail staring at us in open-mouthed amazement. A rope was thrown to us and presently we were lifted aboard the boat in the strong arms of the Captain and Slim Clifford. Then our sidecar bodies were hoisted, and the *Salton's* engines were started again. Meanwhile Johnston and I had summoned enough of our waning strength to strike the bung from a water-cask and enjoy a drink such as we had not dared to take during the entire day. Every cell in our bodies seemed to be crying out for water, and I think we had downed fully a gallon apiece before we even began to feel moist inside. Never in all our lives had we tasted any liquid quite so delicious and refreshing.

Our state of fatigue and exhaustion was such that we were scarcely able to move after we had taken shelter under the canopy over the deck of the boat in the vicinity of the water-cask. Presently Captain Davis came across and began talking to us. The Captain had no more than come near us before he discovered the masses of raw flesh and broken blisters that had once been the palms of our hands. "Don't attempt to touch anything and don't move," he said. "Just sit where you are and wait until I can attend to you." With that he disappeared into the cabin and returned shortly with a box of surgical first-aid equipment. Then he proceeded to bandage our hands with some wonderfully soothing ointment and yard after yard of surgeon's gauze.

"We was just gettin' ready to cook supper over on Pelican Island," he told us, "when Slim looked out to sea. He says to me: 'For Heaven's sake, Captain, look there! There's a couple o' youngsters who've floated down the Alamo River on logs.' I looked, and sure enough I could see your heads bobbin' along out here. It looked as if you was ridin' on nothin'. I says to Slim: 'Slim, they're gone goslings if we don't get out there an' pick 'em up! They'll drown just as sure as shootin'!' We'd just tied the three boats together, ready to pull them around into a cove on the other side of the island. We never even stopped to untie the two boats we had in tow; we just fired up the *Salton's* engines, an' shoved out to sea. What gets me is this: We expected to come out here and find a couple o' kids, and when we get here we find you two educated young men, who ought to have more sense than to be floatin' out here in the middle of this sea in a couple o' tin bath-tubs. It beats anything I ever heard of! It beats Hades, it does!"

At this juncture the Captain turned his conversation from us long enough to call the attention of Slim, who was steering the boat from the wheel on the starboard rail amidships. "Slim," he said, "I haven't told you yet; this fellow's the chap that saved my life the day I was working in Hell's Kitchen alone, and nearly cut my hand off with a fish-knife. I was bleedin' to death when he come droppin' down out o' the sky with that flyin' machine of his'n. He saved my life, he did; and now it looks as if we've just about saved his'n."

When I was able to get a few words into the conversation, I told him the purpose of our attempted journey—how my letter had failed to reach him, and all the other details. The last words were scarcely out of my mouth before the Captain jumped to his feet shouting: "Hey, there, Slim! Where you steerin' for?"

"Mullet Island, sir," came the helmsman's answer.

"Then port your helm and turn about," commanded the Captain. "My friends here want to go to Pelican Island; so put about now and stay on your course till you get there. When a fellow that's saved my life wants to go to Pelican Island, do you think I'd land him on Mullet?"

Eggs and young of the white pelican.

Near as Pelican Island appeared to us before Davis picked us up, it took a full hour and a half to get to it with the motor-boat's engines taking us over the surface of the sea about ten times as fast as we could have paddled. Long before we got there we realized that we undoubtedly owed our lives to Captain Davis, for we could never have reached the island that night in our exhausted condition.

Once ashore on the low volcanic island, Captain Davis commanded Johnston and me to lie down and rest. Dusk was fast settling over the Salton Sea as we sat ourselves at the rough table that Slim and the Captain had improvised. Johnston and I were like two ravenous wolves. We devoured plate after plate of salt pork and beans, and voted Slim a master at cooking.

By reason of its being cooler on the water than on land we slept that night on the boat. Johnston and I had scarcely stretched out before we were dead to the world, and it appeared to be only about three minutes before the rising sun was pelting down in our faces. I attempted to get out of bed, but was so stiff and sore that I could scarcely move. I strained, stretched, and groaned for a full ten minutes before I could even get my feet to the deck, and when I finally did succeed in getting out it seemed as if I were about to come apart every time I moved a joint of my body that hadn't been moved before. My groans awakened Johnston, who began a similar experience before he could pull himself together.

A week later, with most of the ill-effects of our sidecar cruise on the Salton Sea put right and forgotten, we finished up our work of visiting and photographing the various bird islands, and crossed the sea again in the *Salton*. Meanwhile Slim Clifford had completed the task of overhauling the *Pirate*, and with the boats in tow had sailed for Mullet Island two days before. During our entire stay on the islands the heat was terrific. It was so hot, in fact, that we found it impossible to work during the heat of the day and confined our activities almost solely to the cooler hours of the mornings and evenings. The voyage back across the sea was nothing compared with what the trip over in the sidecar bodies had been. Once ashore those little metal sidecar bodies, which had come so near to being our coffins, but which had in reality saved our expedition from failure, were replaced on the motor-cycles and did useful service in their proper sphere during our return to civilization.

"Mrs Robinson Crusoe"

by

IDELLE S. MENG

ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. HILEY

A bride of only four months' standing, Mrs. Meng accompanied her husband to the loneliest islands in the Pacific—a little-known group of uninhabited *atolls* lying only a few feet above sea-level and a thousand miles from the nearest land. Here, with two men, three rabbits, and a dog "Friday," she lived for eleven long months, meeting with experiences that make most fascinating reading.

II.—(*Conclusion.*)

AFTER six weeks on our tropic isle we found it necessary to move nearer to Cooper, where the copra-shed was located. So the odd lumber and the corrugated roofing were rafted across the lagoon to a tiny islet, which we christened in punning fashion "Ourile." Here, beneath the low-spreading palms, we built a "lean-to" consisting of three rooms, which faced the direction from which we got the least bad weather. We chose this small islet owing to the fact that it could be kept clear of leaves and brush, so that the crabs would have no place to hide. At low tide only could we go from Ourile to Cooper on dry land, although the two islets were only a couple of hundred feet apart.

Although everything about our camp was primitive, we had it as conveniently arranged as possible. Our floors were pure white coral sand, cool and easily kept clean. Our water supply was caught in big Oriental stone jars placed beneath the eaves in front of the shack. The "lawn" was smooth, white sand with a small palm here and there surrounded by large conch-shells.

As fish was our main diet we found it rather tiresome to fish three times a day, in spite of the fact that it was no task at all to catch as many as you liked. So we built a woven wire pen in a nearby channel, and kept it filled with live fish, scooping them out with a net as often as we needed them. In this way it was not necessary to fish more than a couple of times a week.

The men worked early and late with the copra, while I took care of the copra-shed and looked after the culinary department. I had, however, plenty of leisure for exploring, and with "Friday"—who had by this time grown to be a big dog—I spent much of my time wandering from one islet to another. The edge of the lagoons often held my attention for hours at a time. I started a shell collection, and would wade to remote shoals in my search for new specimens. At first the men felt uneasy when I took these long rambles, as the waters were full of sharks; but after they had witnessed the way I handled a cane-knife when attacked by one too-inquisitive brute they felt that I was capable of taking care of myself.

I remember on one occasion a huge black conger eel poked his ugly head from a crevice in the coral rock on which I was standing fishing, and rubbed against my bare legs in his endeavour to reach the net that contained my catch of fish. I immediately beat a hasty retreat and started fishing farther down the lagoon. The eel followed me, and when he got his fangs tangled in the mesh of the net I stunned him by giving him a blow on the head with my knife. His skin was so tough that it did not even make an indentation in it. Thinking him dead, I looped my leather belt around his ugly throat and dragged him through the shallow water to the shack. When my husband saw me coming he thought I was bringing in a big fish, so he came out to meet me. He was horrified that I should have come in close contact with such a monster, and was even more so when he discovered, on removing the belt, that the eel was very much alive. He weighed forty-four pounds and was five and a half feet in length.

In spite of the fact that I enjoyed the out-door life, I sometimes longed for people and things that I had left behind. There were times when I yearned for the sight of another woman—to hear one speak, and to have some young woman of my own age as a companion.

When we left Honolulu our little syndicate had been incorporated as the "Island of

Palmyra Copra Company." Beside my husband, there were four other stock-holders, and it was arranged that Mr. Meng was to study conditions on Palmyra, and make charts of channels, shoals, and so on, so that places for docks and warehouses could be decided upon. Benner was to be his assistant. They were, of course, to make as much copra as they could, doing their surveying meanwhile.

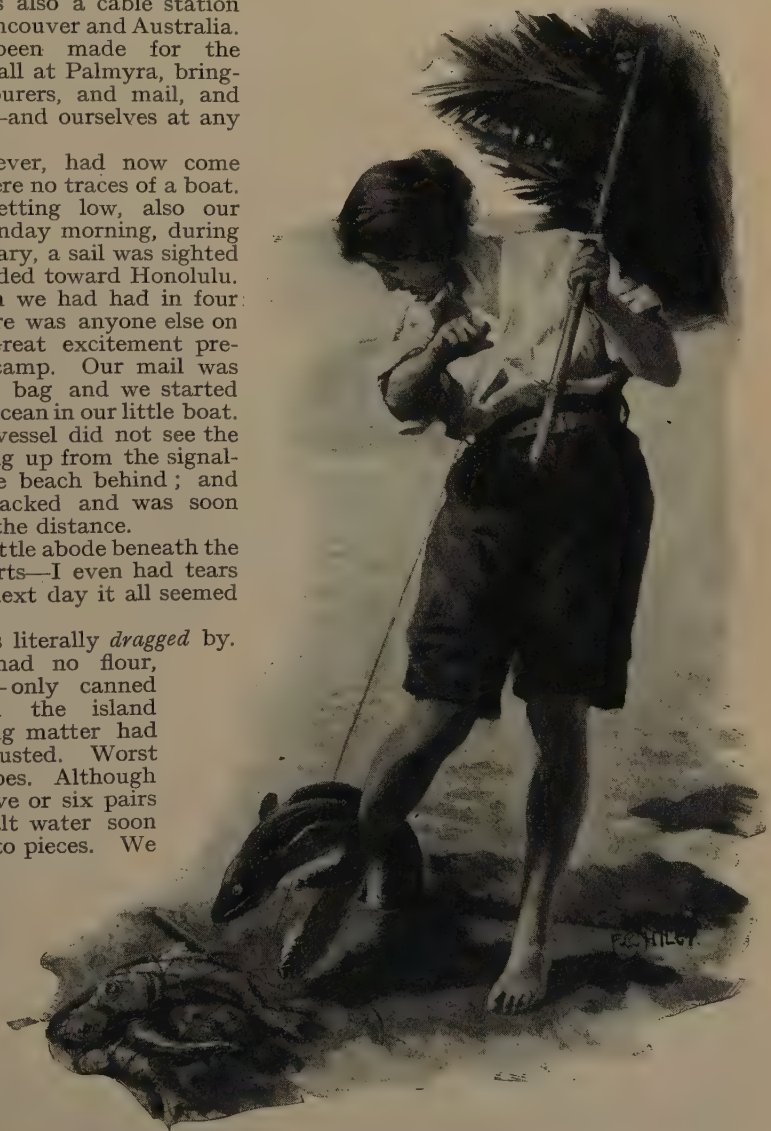
The copra schooner of our nearest neighbours, the Fanning Island people, made four trips a year between their islands and Honolulu. These islands are British possessions and lie about two hundred miles south of Palmyra. Beside being a large copra plantation, Fanning is also a cable station on the line between Vancouver and Australia. Arrangements had been made for the Fanning schooner to call at Palmyra, bringing our supplies, labourers, and mail, and taking out our copra—and ourselves at any time we wished to go.

Four months, however, had now come and gone, and there were no traces of a boat. Our supplies were getting low, also our spirits. Then, one Sunday morning, during the last week in February, a sail was sighted to the south-west, headed toward Honolulu. This was the first sign we had had in four long months that there was anyone else on the Pacific Ocean. Great excitement prevailed in our little camp. Our mail was thrown together in a bag and we started out towards the open ocean in our little boat. However, the sailing vessel did not see the smoke that was pouring up from the signal-fire we had left on the beach behind; and in a short time she tacked and was soon only a dim outline in the distance.

We returned to our little abode beneath the palms with heavy hearts—I even had tears in my eyes. By the next day it all seemed like a dream.

After this the days literally *dragged* by. For weeks we had had no flour, potatoes, or bacon—only canned foods and rice and the island resources. Our reading matter had long since been exhausted. Worst of all we had no shoes. Although we had started with five or six pairs each, the coral and salt water soon caused them to drop to pieces. We patched them with canvas as long as there was anything left to patch; then we tried making canvas ones out of old sails, but it was a hopeless job. Finally we learnt to go barefoot. It was agony at first, and the iodine bottle was in constant use, but at last our feet became accustomed to the sharp stones and coral.

Good Friday marked one of our "red-letter days." On that day, bright and early, a big steamer glided into our anchorage and dropped anchor about two miles out. Our little boat, which had originally been equipped with both sails and a motor, was now only a sailing boat, as her magneto had been out of commission for some time, and we were soon bobbing merrily over the lagoon toward the outer bar, headed for the steamer. We kept our glasses on her and wondered what sort of a boat she was, and why she had stopped at our little *atoll*.



"He rubbed against my bare legs in his endeavour to reach the net."

We soon made her out to be a freighter, and this discovery surprised us, for we were far out of the course of shipping and, in fact, few vessels of any kind ever sighted Palmyra.

After we had cleared the bar we saw a small motor-boat drop over the steamer's side and head toward us. We could also make out the men on deck, and soon noticed that they wore the uniform of Uncle Sam's navy, which puzzled us more than ever. We met the motor-boat halfway, lowered our sails and took the line they threw us. Much rejoicing took place when we found that one of the men on board the little craft was Edric Cooke, a young Honolulan, who was acting as Mr. Meng's attorney during his absence from Honolulu.

After "Friday" had been quieted—poor dog, she had never known anyone but we three!—Cooke jumped aboard our boat and we were soon being towed behind the motor-boat to the steamer, while Cooke did his best to answer the questions that we showered on him. He told us the United States had a new President, but that otherwise the world was still much where we had left it five months before; and then he began to explain why he was there.

The Fanning Island boat, it appeared, had changed its route and now went to San Francisco direct. It did not come by Honolulu at all, so we had been marooned all this time without knowing it. The Japanese, upon their return to Honolulu, had told a weird tale about getting lost, and it had been impossible to charter another

The supplies were carried ashore by the sailors under Benner's supervision."

local boat to visit us. As a last resort the United States naval authorities had been appealed to, the result being that this big collier, the U.S.S. *Nero*, had been permitted to deviate from her route to Samoa and call at Palmyra. Not only that, but Cooke had been allowed to accompany her in order that he might confer with my husband.

By the time we had learnt these facts we were ascending the gangway to the deck above. The mate met us at the head of the stair and gave us a hearty greeting. Sailors surrounded us on every side, adding greatly to "Friday's" fright.

We were escorted to the captain's cabin, where this kind and courteous gentleman had breakfast waiting for us. Although the menu consisted of things we had longed for, we did not eat a great deal, owing to excitement.

There are very few occasions when a woman fails to think of her personal appearance, and at this unusual time I took a mental inventory of our attire. The handsome skipper, Captain Lewis, was immaculate in a spotless white uniform, and even his nails showed signs of recent grooming. Mr. Meng wore khaki breeches, a blue shirt open at the throat, and on the back of his chair hung his "Farmer John" hat. Young Benner looked positively comical in an extremely short and rather faded blue bathing-suit and a heavy sweater, and his green felt hat had certainly seen its best days. As for me, I wore black sateen bloomers, a white shirt of my husband's—thank goodness it was clean!—a straw hat, a red bandana, and my hair in a braid. All three of us, of course, were barefoot. Fortunately the men were freshly shaven and had had recent hair-cuts—the latter being a work of art executed by the only female barber on Palmyra.

"Mail! Mail!" yelled a petty officer, and he marched into the room and deposited on the floor the biggest mail-bag I ever saw.

Grin? You should have seen him! He was the first man in the history of the Pacific Ocean who had ever delivered mail to Palmyra. Not only that, but he knew that we three isolated souls had not had a letter or messenger for five long months.

Then "Friday" proceeded to have a fight with the ship's mascot, an old grey cat. The battle was forced on her. She had never seen another animal in her life except "Bun Boy," the rabbit; and he had never shown signs of hostility. So, when this spitting, scratching whirlwind landed on her back, her one idea was to get between her master's feet and let off her surprise in unearthly yelps. After a few chairs had been overturned, the captain seized his cat and I rescued my dog, which I sent below in the custody of one of the officers.

Captain Lewis then told me that there was a half-grown cat aboard the ship which he would be glad to give me if I cared to have it. Did I care to have it? I nearly

kissed his hand! So "Sir Jerry" was presented. He was snow white, with a few black markings. He could do tricks and had lovely manners. That kind-hearted captain will never know just what that white kitten meant to a lonely little woman on a lonely island in the Pacific.

After our provisions, mail, reading matter, and so on had been stored in the small boats, the officers and ourselves started for the islands in the motor-boat, with the small boats bringing up the rear, carrying about twenty-five men. We had to anchor a long way from "Ourile" as the tide was quite low, and the supplies were carried ashore by the sailors under Benner's supervision.

Mr. Cooke, after seeing the commercial value of Palmyra, agreed with my husband that it would be better to purchase a boat of our own rather than give up the proposition owing to lack of transportation. He therefore decided to go on to Samoa on the *Nero*, and then catch an Oceanic steamer back to Honolulu. I made up my mind to remain with my husband on Palmyra and come out on the sailing vessel, for I had no suitable clothes to wear on the Oceanic boat, and would have to go second-class, which I knew would not be pleasant. Besides, should the *Nero* meet bad weather before reaching Samoa she would probably miss connection with the boat that was sailing for Honolulu, when I should have to spend a whole month at Samoa.

Therefore, after having dinner that night in the officers' dining-room, we bade them all good-bye and climbed down into our little boat, pulled away from the big freighter, and saw her propeller splash as the anchor came up.

"Good-bye! Good luck! God bless you!" called the mate from the bridge as the steamer began to move.

"Aye, aye!" we answered, and then our sails filled and we started to get back to our little palm-clad *atoll*.

At midnight we anchored near the shack, and portaged our supplies ashore. We built a fire, cooked the fresh meat, and started reading our letters. Far into the morning we sat there reading letter after letter from our families and friends. Some few were from strangers who had read of our venture in the papers, and wrote either to congratulate us or to gain information about the Pacific Isles. It was sun-up when we finished.

April, May, and June dragged slowly by. We had nearly forgotten the visit of the *Nero;* it seemed like a dream. "Jerry," the little white cat, was the only evidence of the steamer's reality. The sailors' shoes and heavy socks that we had purchased had lasted only a few weeks, and once again we were barefoot. Once more, too, our larder was nearly empty. We had worked steadily, and we watched anxiously for a sail on the horizon. "Friday" had learned some new tricks, "Bun Boy" the rabbit had adopted "Jerry," and "Jerry" had got his land legs and was a regular "shore" cat.

July found our larder a mere stack of canned beans, corn, and tomatoes. We had cut ourselves down to two meals a day, which consisted mainly of island resources. Our frying-pans had burned full of holes, and after vain efforts had been made to cement them with salt and ashes, they were discarded and the big black pot was used for frying fish as well as boiling coconut cabbage. The bottoms of our lanterns were leaking like sieves, and to save our precious oil we stood them in pie-tins, pouring the oil back into the lantern when the tin was full. Every day we had to invent a new makeshift for something that rusted or wore out.

Looking for ships got to be a wild mania with us. Again our reading matter was exhausted; we read some of the magazines over for the second or third time. We hunted shells desperately and madly to keep from growing despondent.

Every evening the three of us watched the wonderful sunsets from the north-west beach, at the same time straining our eyes for some speck on the horizon that might turn out to be a sail. Sometimes a booby, flying low on the horizon, or a white-cap far out at sea, would send us running to the house for the glasses.

The last week in August found Mr. Meng sick in bed—the first and only illness we had on the islands. He had an old shrapnel wound that had never given him any trouble since the War was over, but now—owing, no doubt, to bad diet—it broke out and caused him a great deal of pain. Benner and I took turns at night taking care of him. Our medicine chest had been well stocked by a physician, and we tried everything that it contained, but nothing seemed to give him any relief.

One day I stacked the remainder of our supplies on the table and took stock. They would last six days, perhaps; then there would be nothing but fish—and coconuts. In our minds we planned wild schemes of rigging up our twenty-five-foot sail-boat and starting for Fanning Island. Had we done such a thing I should not be here to write the tale.

On August 28th smoke was seen on the horizon to the south-west. *Was* it smoke, or was it a water-spout? We strained our eyes and took turns using the glasses. Yes; it *was* smoke! Presently you could see the tips of masts and wireless outfit! Glory! But wait—we must do something to stop her!

The ship was directly west of us, bearing north-east; so at the same time that she was drawing nearer she was also passing by to the north. Would she be too far past by the time she was near enough to see our signal?

We started a fire with copra and dry leaves; then we piled green leaves and grass on the leaping flames. A great column of black smoke curled to the sky. By this time the ship was nearly past; the top of her bridge was barely visible. My heart sank to my bare feet. There was life, food, people—a doctor perhaps—not more than seven miles away! And yet—— Look! She was turning! Her two masts were in line! Saved, thank goodness!

Benner and I grabbed the bag of mail and started for the sail-boat, anchored near by. Mr. Meng went back to bed thoroughly exhausted. In a very few minutes we were bobbing over the blue lagoon toward the anchorage.

During the first part of our trip I managed to write a short note to my mother. I knew that when the letters reached my family in Texas and our friends in Honolulu they would wonder how on earth we managed to get our mail out from the islands. The brief explanation I wrote her was something like this:—

"Finally I got hold, shut my eyes, gritted my teeth, and made a jump."

"DEAREST MOTHER,—Benner and I are sailing out to a big steamer that is anchored three miles out. We don't know what she is, where she is bound for, nor what she will do to us when we reach her. Billy is laid up with an old shrapnel wound; but don't be alarmed, he will be all right in a day or so. Other letters I am mailing you will give you news up to date. Have been well, but anxious. We stopped the boat with a smoke signal. Hurriedly, and with much love.

"DELL."

By the time I had completed this rather breathless missive, we had reached the tiny channel that leads out into the open sea. Benner turned the tiller over to me, took the sheet, and helped the tiny craft to dodge submerged coral-heads by drawing in or letting out the boom.

The glasses had been left with my husband, so we were quite near the steamer before we could make out what sort of vessel she was. We discovered that she was not anchored but drifting; also that she was a huge freighter. The word *London* was soon visible on her stern, so we realized she was a British boat.

"Now see here, Dell," Benner rapidly addressed me, "since you are the elder and the lady of the party, you will no doubt be expected to do all the talking; so remember to tell the captain of your husband's connection with the British army. Explain to him that both of you are British subjects, and emphasize the fact that we are out of food and very despondent. We have stopped this boat, they have had to 'lay to' for an hour waiting for us to get out to them, and everything depends on the attitude of the officers as to how we shall be received."

We could now plainly see about seventy-five men lined up along the rail eagerly watching our approach. We noted here and there glasses being handed from one man to another, while their wild gesticulations assured us that they were as much excited over being stopped at sea as we were over stopping them. Since all charts show Palmyra to be an uninhabited island it is no wonder that they were astonished to be signalled from there.

While we were eagerly watching the movements of the men, I felt a sudden twist of the tiller, and the rudder became a dead weight in my hand. I yelled to Benner and he came aft, and discovered that the steel eyes that support the rudder were worn through. We hauled the heavy rudder in and Benner grabbed one of the oars and steered with that, while he ordered me to take the boom-line. When I turned my back toward the steamer and grasped the line, the men along the rail could plainly see the dark braid of hair outlined against my white blouse, and a shout went up: "One of 'em is a woman!" Benner and I both wore straw hats, white shirts, and wading breeches, so they had taken us to be men until my hair betrayed my sex.

By the time all the fellows had had another squint at us through the glasses we were alongside and had caught their line and let down our sails. A sea-ladder was lowered from the deck, thirty feet above, and I was asked to "Come right up." I took a deep breath and braced myself to put foot for the first time off United States territory.

The steamer rolled and pitched; the small boat bobbed and plunged. Sometimes we crashed against the steel sides of the big vessel; the next plunge threw us eight feet away from her. I had no more than made up my mind to mount the ladder than the little boat would drop down six or seven feet and the ladder would be jerked from my grasp; then I would come riding up so fast that I had no chance to grab it as I passed by. Finally I got hold, shut my eyes, gritted my teeth, thought of the mustang colts I used to ride back in Texas, and made a jump. When I opened my eyes I saw that I had landed on the third step from the bottom, my body swaying like a pendulum.

Up, up, up, I went. Should I *never* reach the top? My swiftly moving thoughts were something like this: "Oh, I wish mother and Billy could see me climbing this ladder! Suppose I fell! Would I be crushed between the steamer and the boat, or would the sharks get me? I wonder which would be the most painful?"

At this point woman's vanity came to my rescue, and I happened to remember that the straw hat I was wearing had the whole top torn out, and I wondered how a "bird's-eye" view looked. I knew that my hair was horribly rough; no doubt it was sticking through the top of my dilapidated headgear.

Suddenly I saw two nice white shoes in line with my hat-brim! How funny! There were a pair of feet in them, and the feet protruded from nice white duck breeches! An officer, of course! Then an immaculate, strong-looking hand appeared close to my face. How white it was, how clean! I glanced at my own hands, clinging to the ladder, smeared with tar from the Jacob's ladder, and brown from the tropical sun. It suddenly occurred to me how strong and sure my hands looked in spite of the tan and grime. My thoughts were carried away from the comparison of hands by the sound of the most encouraging voice I ever heard, saying: "Just take my hand, little girl; I will pull you up."

I dreaded putting my grimy brown hand into that clean big one, but it was a nice voice, so I took the proffered hand. Sure enough, I was pulled right up! My bare feet rested on the steel deck; my blinking eyes stared into the face of a young officer; while some fifty or sixty men stood curiously by. Five pairs of hands helped me over the rail. I could not speak, and it seemed that I had not taken a breath since I left the small boat thirty feet below.

"Quite an experience, madam!" said the young officer, bowing.

I thought so myself, but could not tell him what I thought just then. I only gulped and stared.

"May I see your captain?" I finally blurted out, after what seemed a whole ten minutes.

"Follow me, madam," answered the officer.

I started after him. The men fell back and gave us passage. I meekly followed the officer up the steel stair, and when we reached the next deck he pointed to another stair leading to the bridge, telling me the captain would receive me there. He then returned to escort Benner.

I learned from the captain that this was an Australian freighter, *en route* from New Zealand to San Francisco, *viâ* Suva, Fiji. She had formerly been a German boat, but was taken over by the British. The captain was wonderfully kind and obliging. After Benner joined us we managed to make our story clear, and the officer showed us every consideration. He sent a wireless for us, took our mail, and gave us supplies. For the latter he refused to take a cheque, stating that some day his ship might go to pieces on our reef, when he would have to depend on *our* hospitality.

The Authoress with her husband (right) and Edwin Benner.

Forty-five minutes after I ascended that terrible sea-ladder I descended it, hung to the bottom for a second, then closed my eyes and jumped toward the small, bobbing boat, landing safely on a bag of potatoes. We rowed away from the steamer a short distance, saw her great propellers begin to turn, waved to the captain, then hoisted our sails and began our first tack towards Palmyra.

It took three hours to get in as we were headed into the wind. Before we reached the anchorage we spied my sick husband, accompanied by "Friday" and "Jerry," waiting for us on the beach. After explaining all the details of our visit aboard the steamer, and answering his eager questions, we proceeded to examine our stores. There we found ham, beans, flour, tea, coffee, sugar, spices, and beef-tea, besides a great bag of books, magazines, newspapers, and smokes for the men.

During the long summer the young men in Honolulu who were connected with our firm had been nearly desperate over our predicament. They had heard of a sailing-vessel that was to make a trip to Fanning Island, the British cable station two hundred miles south-east of Palmyra. This boat was evidently the one that Cooke had in mind to charter when he returned to Honolulu. They made arrangements with her captain to stop at Palmyra and leave supplies and mail for us; also to relieve our minds by telling us that our own boat, which was under construction in Honolulu, would soon be completed and would come and fetch us.

The sailing-vessel duly went to Fanning, but when she left there she had to slip her anchor. She then stopped at Washington Island, another of the Fanning group, and there she lost her second and last anchor. So, when Palmyra was sighted, the captain decided it would be suicide to try to make the anchorage in such a fierce gale as was blowing, and they sailed on. We did not even see the vessel. When she reached Honolulu she reported that no sign of life had been seen on our island.

The motor for our new craft was ordered from Chicago, but was lost in transit; so another had to be ordered, after several weeks had been spent in trying to trace the original one. All these things made our friends' faces grow longer and their uneasiness increase. Then, on August 29th, Joseph Stickney, the young President of the Company, received my wireless message from the British vessel, which read:—

"No supplies. Despondent. Expect aid soon. Meng."

That was the last straw! Stickney dared not tell Benner's family or my cousin, Judge Kemp, who resided in Honolulu, of our predicament, so he jumped into his car and sped to the Naval Base at Pearl Harbour. There he got in touch with Commander R. D. Kirkpatrick, head of the Naval Air Service in the Hawaiian Islands. Thrusting the message into the officer's hands, he burst out:—

"Commander, you recently stated you hoped some day to make a survey of the Palmyra group. If you are going to do so, for Heaven's sake go now!"

Just three weeks later the U.S.S. *Eagle Forty* drifted into our anchorage, and we three sailed out to her in our little boat. Mr. Meng, owing to proper diet, had quite recovered from his recent illness.

When we were some distance away we were sure that the boat was the *Forty*, as she is quite a familiar object around the

harbour of Honolulu, being the regular tender for the big seaplanes that do survey work around the Hawaiian group. We were glad, for we realized that Uncle Sam had turned his eagle eye upon this wee dot in the Pacific.

As we drew nearer we could see the wings of the great plane the ship carried, the white uniforms of the sailors, and we were soon staring into the lens of the big cameras that snapped repeatedly as we approached.

I don't suppose a more dishevelled group of guests ever lunched with the *Forty's* officers than we three self-made exiles. How we talked! News was never so welcome to anyone before. We stayed aboard until the afternoon tide; then the officers accompanied us ashore for the night.

Great excitement prevailed among the sea-birds the next day, as the huge seaplane soared and swooped above the islands. All day long the cameras were busy taking "bird's-eye" views of our beautiful little *atoll*. Groups of sailors added splashes of white to the green background of the islands as they made explorations along the beaches.

I seemed to be in a trance all day. After such long isolation it seemed impossible to believe my eyes when I looked out and saw the dozens of men, to say nothing of the seaplane circling high above the lagoons.

On the first evening that the *Forty's* officers were with us, I discovered two very interesting things: First, that Commander Kirkpatrick and I were born and reared within thirty miles of each other and had many mutual friends; second, that I was to be permitted to accompany the *Forty* upon her return trip to Honolulu, as her doctor felt that the strain had been too much for me.

Upon the third morning after the boat's arrival our usually well-kept yard was in great disorder. My bags and trunks were piled in a heap in front of the house, with the baggage of the officers. The small boats were drawn up at the side, and the plane took a farewell flight over the islands and then dropped beside the *Forty* ready to be hoisted aboard.

At ten o'clock all was in readiness for us to put out to the waiting steamer. I had a dull ache in my heart as I gazed around the familiar groves of palms. How calm and peaceful it all looked! The long stretches of beach had never seemed so white and inviting, nor the lagoons so blue. I even had a kindly thought for the clumsy old boobies as they waddled along the edge of the water. "Friday" and "Jerry" made a lump come in my throat as they rubbed affectionately against my feet. When I noticed the forlorn faces of my husband and Benner my heart was nearly broken.

The motor-dory which carried me away from my island home towed in its wake the *Forty's* lifeboat, her wherry, and our own little punt. When we made a turn the last I saw of the tiny islet that had been my home for so long was a brown dog and a white cat snuggled close together on the sand. I have often thought of those little pets of mine since, wondering how many times they have stationed themselves in that same spot, looking out to sea for the mistress who never returned.

Benner and my husband stayed aboard the *Forty* until the plane was hauled on deck; then they were towed back to the edge of the lagoon by the motor-dory, which presently returned and was swung to its davits.

Exactly at twelve o'clock the bells jingled, the flag came down, the anchor was hoisted, and the whistle blew. The *Forty* was under way! As soon as her propellers began to leave a swirling wake behind, a chair was placed for me on the bridge, and from there, through tears and field-glasses, I saw two men waving their hats and a brown dog wagging her tail. Gradually all of them became lost to sight against the background of their lonely isle.

I have been back in civilization some time now, and have got quite used to civilized surroundings; but still, sometimes I long for Palmyra's beautiful solitude, her lagoons and tropical showers, her waving palms and booming surf.

For a while I was quite a curiosity; I was pointed out in the street, and my pictures appeared in the papers accompanied by lengthy articles. Now, however, I am a conventional woman again, wearing conventional clothes, and living a conventional life.

Shall I ever go back? Perhaps, some day. I would like to go on a short trip, accompanied by another woman—but not to live. I am glad, very glad, to have had this unusual experience; glad to have been the first and only white woman to put foot on Palmyra; and very proud of the fact that one of her beautiful little islets will bear the name of "Idelle" in my honour. But I shall not repeat the experience. The novelty has worn off, and it would not be an adventure again. Besides, Palmyra is no longer the loneliest island in the Pacific Ocean, for she is now the regular port of call for our Company's new schooner, which brings great loads of iced fish and dried copra to find a ready market in Honolulu. No; Palmyra is a modern Pacific Isle now, with no lasting attraction for "Mrs. Robinson Crusoe."

THE END.

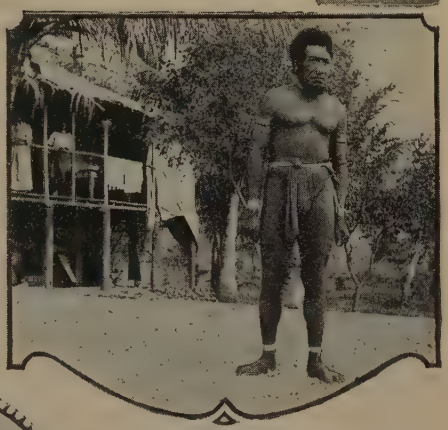
AMONG NEW GUINEA CANNIBALS

Told by
H C. PRATT
And set down by
REGINALD POUND

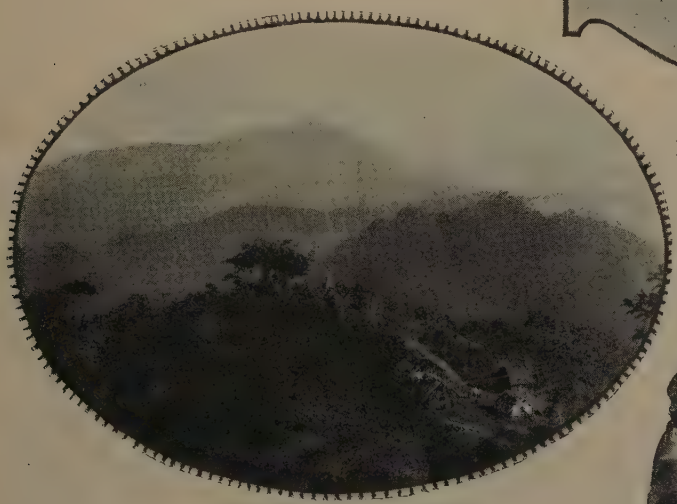
Mr. Pratt is a well-known naturalist, and here describes some interesting incidents of his recent journey into the interior of Papua in quest of specimens.

NATURAL history work in New Guinea is a fascinating pursuit, not only because that country offers an almost virgin field for research, but because it remains to-day pretty much what it was centuries ago—a land of mystery and of apparently unfathomable secrets.

The journey which it is my purpose to describe in this article took me from Yule Island, on Hall Sound—roughly sixty miles north-west of Port Moresby—inland to Mount Kibea, lying some seventy or eighty miles up country and approached *viâ* the mosquito-ridden Bioto Creek and the little-known native settlements of Oofafa, Epa, and Ekei-kei.



This truculent-looking gentleman had served a term of imprisonment for the murder of a white man.



A landscape in Cannibal-land.

With Bioto in the rear, maps became useless. Except that the route was marked by the villages I have mentioned, I knew

Ekei-kei belles.

practically nothing of the districts through which the expedition, comprising myself and forty carriers, was to pass, a fact which naturally added to the interest of the journey.

Difficulties and discomforts began to manifest themselves almost as soon as we left the coast. On Bioto Creek, for instance, the mosquitoes made life very nearly unendurable. They literally swarmed about us, being more numerous in this locality, it is said, than in any other part of the country. As some sort of compensation, however, game is almost equally plentiful, and I enjoyed good sport among duck, pigeons, wallabies, wild pig, and cassowaries.

That particular bugbear of New Guinea travel, the "stinging tree," also figured prominently in the list of trials which we were required to face. It resembles a sycamore but, unlike the latter, its leaves are furnished with spines that inflict painful stings on the traveller who is unlucky enough to come in contact with them. The slightest touch is sufficient to bring up an alarming-looking blister, and this is followed by inflammation, often so acute as to be almost maddening. The smarting and itching last at least twelve hours, and, so far as I know, there is no antidote other than patience.

Another species of vegetation that commanded our grudging attention was the rotan vine, known among white men by the more descriptive, if less euphonious, name of "hell-upon-earth." It is equipped with retrograde spikes which fix the flesh as firmly as teeth and inflict a nasty wound.

There was also a nettle-like plant, the leaves of which, on touching one's flesh, caused a painful rash, following which a feeling of numbness set in, as if Nature had applied a local anæsthetic. Some of the tribesfolk I met regarded the leaves as a specific for many ailments. They rubbed them on the affected part and looked on the resultant loss of sensation as a sign that the malady had disappeared.

On nearing Epa we were met by thirty more carriers, who had been sent to my assistance by Mavai, the autocratic chief of the village. As we approached, Mavai emerged from his hut, mounted a near-by open-air platform, used exclusively for ceremonial purposes, and welcomed me in a long and extremely flowery speech. Of fine build and commanding manner, Mavai proved to be a real father of his people, and a particularly strict disciplinarian.

His customary mode of punishing village culprits was a thrashing with a big stick, whether the offender was a child, a woman, or a man like himself. He had an adopted son whom he ordered to return with one of my "boys" to Oofafa to collect some stores, and when the lad showed his unwillingness to go, the chief seized his cudgel and beat him soundly about the back and shoulders. Though this correction provoked hardly more than a whimpering protest from the victim, it inspired all the women in the place to set up a most unholy wailing. At this, Mavai promptly dropped his stick and rushed off to the privacy of his sago plantation, where—apparently overcome by shame—he remained in hiding for some time.

I took notes while we were at Epa of a rather curious method of drawing water from the communal spring, half a mile from the village. Twice a day the women went down in chattering groups to the spring, carrying bamboo pipes twelve feet long. These pipes were made by forcing out the pith at the joints, and held about five gallons of water apiece. When full, the drinking end was plugged with leaves, the pipe being stood in a shady spot near its owner's house and used when needed. Incidentally, drinking from these weird receptacles was a rather hazardous business, care being necessary lest a too copious supply should gush out when the pipe was held to the mouth.

A day's steady marching brought us to Ekei-kei, lying among the foothills that mark the approach to the distant and still little-known Owen-Stanley mountain range. The path between the two villages was stony and wound over hill and dale and through dense forest country. As we tramped along, a new discomfort made its presence felt in the shape of innumerable leeches which fastened on our feet, inflicting tiny three-cornered punctures and releasing considerable quantities of blood. The "boys," being unprotected about the legs, suffered more than I did from the nuisance. They would continue marching until a dozen or so leeches clung to their feet; then they would fall out of the ranks and, sitting down, pull the horrible creatures off with their fingers. In spite of my boots, I more than once found my socks saturated with blood.

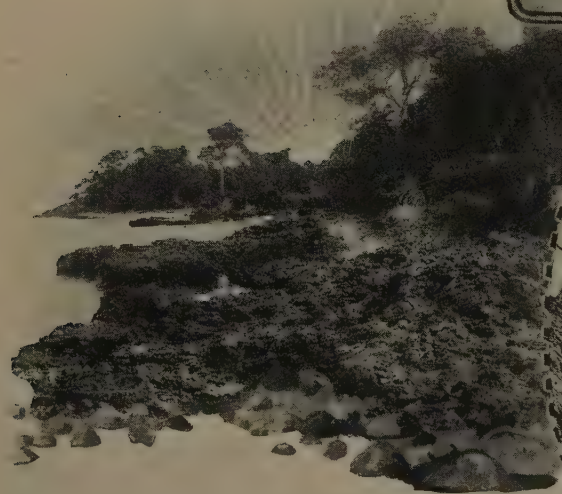
The camp at Ekei-kei was situated in a clearing that overlooked a picturesque and extremely fertile valley. One veranda of my hut faced the valley; the other looked towards the jungle, so that moth-trapping work, my nightly occupation, could be carried on whatever the direction of the wind. For the benefit of the uninitiated I ought perhaps to explain that lamps were placed in one or the other veranda, the beams attracting the moths to a white sheet, on which they were captured in wide-necked cyanide bottles. Sometimes as many as two or three hundred moths would come in during a night, the "bag" being occasionally varied by pigeons flying blindly into the lights and beating their wings against the lamps until they were caught.

I had been settled here two or three weeks, during which time specimen-collecting had begun in real earnest, when trouble threatened us at the hands of Kafulu, the surly chief of a village six miles distant. Kafulu was one of those tribal headmen who

Hall Sound, the starting point of the expedition.

particularly in the Ekei-kei neighbourhood, expressly for the purpose of studying its natural history, and while not desirous of cumbering Kafulu or his friends with my presence, I was certainly not disposed to accede to his peremptory demand that I are notoriously intolerant of the white man and his ways. Quite legitimately, it seemed to me, he argued that the interference of the white man was uncalled for; he preferred that I should go my way, while he went his. However, I was in New Guinea, and more

The "pow-wow poles" which are built up every evening in the villages and serve as a general rendezvous.



The rock-bound New Guinea coast near Yule Island.

Natives of the Amana district.

should clear out. A message to this effect, couched in friendly terms, was accordingly sent to him.

Kafulu's answer was a refusal to deliver the sago stalks which he had promised that his people should obtain for me and for which I had already paid him in advance. He also sent threatening messages to my carriers, vowing that if any of them were seen in the forest they would be killed. Further, he forbade me to use firearms, informing me that all game in the district was his personal property and that no white man had the right to hunt it.

Now, to a sport-loving Englishman this was a very tiresome restriction, and I am afraid that I treated it with scant attention. At any rate, I continued to have wild pig for supper whenever this was possible, while roast pigeon and duck were fairly familiar items on my menu.

At length, on receiving a deputation of carriers, all of whom were obviously scared by Kafulu's repeated threats, I sent one of my most experienced native collectors, Ow-bow, to Kafulu's village to try and placate that dusky martinet. Ow-bow had a decidedly unpleasant time, and returned with nothing but a whole skin, the rest of his belongings, including his clothes and the little "vanity bag" containing all sorts of weird odds and ends which every Papuan carries, having been confiscated. Following this outrage Kafulu sent word that the next person from my camp who entered his village would be killed and eaten!

Knowing that Kafulu was not the type of man to be trifled with and also that his present mood was a dangerous one—only a short time before he had attacked and robbed the mission house at Ekei-kei—I decided to interview him in person, to show the old reprobate that I was not afraid of him. Accordingly, in company with Ow-bow, who, I verily believe, had more regard for his little bag of odds and ends than for his own life, I set off for Kafulu's village, where we found the chief sitting outside his hut smoking, looking anything but delighted to see me.

He made no sign whatever by way of welcome, but continued to puff stolidly away at his pipe, sending cloud after cloud of pungent smoke into the air as an indication of his contempt for us.

Seating myself in front of him, I began my harangue, partly in the chief's own tongue and partly through Ow-bow, who acted as interpreter, besides occasionally interjecting some telling remarks on his own account. My speech lasted fifty minutes, during which time Kafulu uttered not so much as a grunt, either of approval or disapproval. For all the good I seemed to have done, I might as well have addressed the moon.

The one-sided parley continued for some minutes longer; then Kafulu removed his pipe from his mouth, and casually remarked that he did not want any of us in his district, and that he could give no assurance whatever that his people would not attack us. Also, he calmly helped himself to my tobacco, without any suggestion of a "by your leave" or a word of thanks.

There are some blandishments, however, which will turn the heart of the most adamant of savages. Kafulu's interest was kindled when I began to fumble with the large bundle on which up till then I had been sitting. The sight of enough tobacco to last him months made him sit up and take very evident notice, while the promise of an axe, together with other gifts of the kind, had the long-looked-for effect of converting his animosity into friendship and even respect. Signalling to one of his wives, he produced Ow-bow's precious bag, following this up by promising to deliver the sago stalks within the next two days, and giving me an assurance that in future the expedition would go unmolested. Thus was a treaty of peace, unsigned and unsealed, yet honoured to the last detail, concluded with Kafulu, the cannibal chief, who thereafter confined his bloodthirsty proclivities to plundering other tribes.

An earthquake, not serious but decidedly alarming, was one of my experiences while in the Ekei-kei district. The two shocks caused my hut to rock violently, and while there were no preliminary rumblings there were other equally disturbing phenomena—an inky-black sky that seemed to split asunder immediately over our heads, with rain that came down in sheets and lightning and thunder that enhanced the terrible grandeur of the occasion. Following this, a hurricane blew up the valley with a force that nearly demolished the camp. Fortunately no great damage was done, and very soon Mother Nature was smiling on us again.

Shortly after this an outbreak of German measles seemed likely to bring the expedition to an untimely end. The "boys" blamed me for bringing the sickness into their midst, and ugly rumours of wholesale desertion came to my ears, without, however, being confirmed in fact. When the "boys" realized that I was not responsible and that I was doing everything in my power to alleviate their sufferings, they changed their tone and set about treating themselves after the custom of the country.

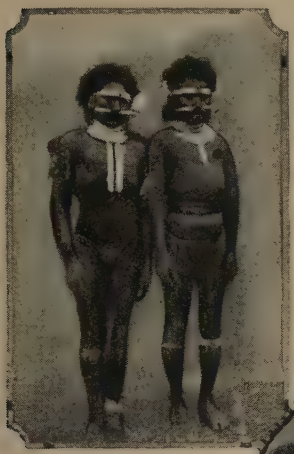
The patients sat in pairs on the ground, facing each other. One man then took a small drill made of cassowary bone, fastened to a wooden shaft, and placed the point on a vein in the other's forehead. The drill was then worked by means of a bow, the string of which was turned once round the drill-shaft. A circular movement of the bow caused the drill to revolve first to the right and then to the left, and in this manner a small puncture was made in the vein, until

the blood spurted out. In some instances half a pint or more was allowed to escape, the wound being afterwards covered with ashes or cauterized with a hot cinder.

When the epidemic abated I made arrangements to set off unescorted on a forty-mile jaunt to Yo-ya-ka, one of the most remarkable villages in New Guinea and, for that matter, in the world. It is perched on the razor-edge crest of a ridge two thousand feet in height, the track forming the village high street being less than *two feet* wide, with huts, supported at the back by piles, ranged on either side of it.

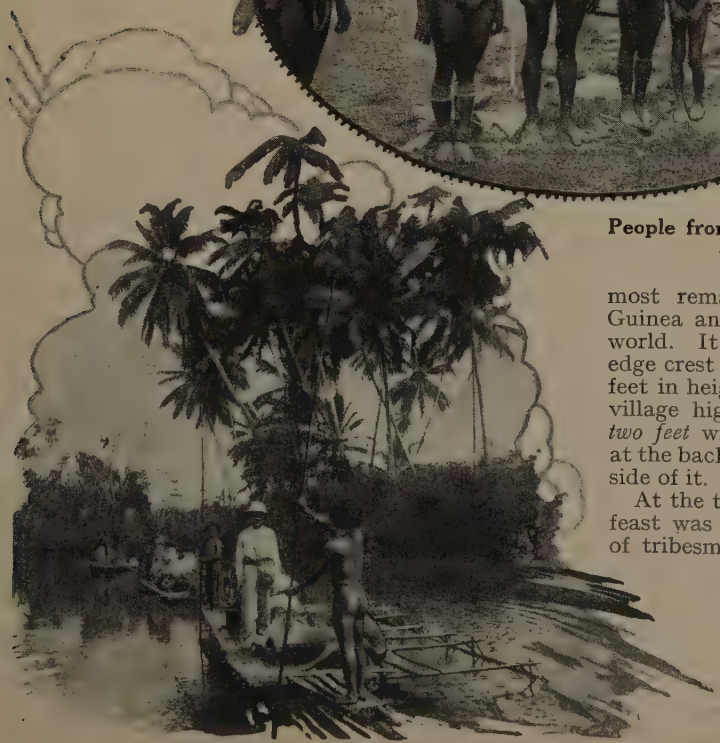
At the time of my arrival a great feast was being prepared, numbers of tribesmen strolling to and fro in full-feathered regalia and war-paint. Some of the visitors, notably some men from the Baw-boi country, had never seen

Mr. H. C. Pratt with a sixteen-foot python.



Natives of Dindwa, where the party spent several days.

People from the hostile village of Madui.



The expedition travelling up Bioto Creek.

a white man before, and at first were alarmed by my appearance. It was only after much persuasion that they consented to come forward and view me at close quarters, while none of them would accept the invitation to touch my hand.

My stay in this interesting village was cut short by lack of provisions and by the unwillingness of the people to furnish me with extra carriers. After a two days' stay in their midst, therefore, I made my way back to Mount Kibea, the journey being accomplished in continuously heavy rains. To add to this, I was obliged to fall back on a diet of sweet potatoes, which, when they figure on the menu three or four times a day, are apt to become monotonous. One day I shot a bird-of-paradise, and having roasted it on a stick held over the fire, sat down to what I hoped would prove a satisfying meal. But the first mouthful was enough—the flesh was as bitter as gall!

That same night, just after I had turned in, a mournful wailing noise came to my ears from the village, and at once I realized that something was amiss. A few minutes later a boy ran into my hut with the news that another native, who turned out to be my man Ow-bow's brother, had been murdered.

Investigations showed that the murdered man had stolen the wife of another native and taken her to his hut. It had then occurred to the abductor that perhaps it would be more honest to pay for the lady, and with this object in view he presented himself at her husband's house, hoping to strike a bargain.

Five minutes later he lay dead outside the hut, with a spear sticking through his body.

At first revenge was seriously talked of by the murdered man's friends, and it looked as if there was going to be trouble. Gradually, however, this idea resolved itself into a demand that the murderer should be punished by being made to hand over a pig as the price of the victim's life. Two messengers were therefore sent to the murderer's hut, returning the same day with the pig slung on a pole. The pig was roasted and eaten, and the "incident" was looked upon as closed.

Shortage of food made it necessary that I should go back to Ekei-kei to fetch the provisions that we so badly needed. Owing to the evil reputation of the village of Madui, through which our route lay, I had the greatest difficulty in persuading a sufficient number of carriers to accompany me, but finally, after protracted negotiations and promises of gifts, I managed to get a handful of men together, and we set off. The outward journey was accomplished with little trouble. The return, however, was rather more eventful.

Reaching Madui again, we found the people in a state of great excitement, culminating in a fracas and the murder of a man. Hardly had we got settled in the huts where we were to spend the night than we were waited on by a deputation of natives, who demanded that I should give up one of my carriers as a sacrifice for the victim.

Naturally I could not see my way to accede to this request, though the sullen attitude of the natives showed that they meant business.

That night was one of the most restless, and certainly the longest in point of suspense, that I have ever experienced. The natives were insistent in their demand and showed an inclination to take matters into their own hands. Fearing an attack, I barricaded the door of my hut and set a guard outside. Then, as soon as the first signs of dawn appeared, we gathered our stores together, crept stealthily out of the village, and made our way back to the camp, my own relief at reaching comparative safety being no less than that of my carriers, who had endured agonies of suspense all night;

My next move was to Amana, a village built on a ridge about two days' march from Mount Kibea. As we approached it the carriers suddenly halted and, setting down their loads, refused to go on, for the perfectly valid reason that some time before the chief of Amana had murdered one of their people.

I therefore went into the village unaccompanied, and sought out the chief. This rather imposing-looking person, on observing my coming, retreated to a tree-house—one of the most remarkable of the many curiosities I have seen in New Guinea.

The tree-house stood in the middle of the village and consisted of a large tree whose trunk, shorn of its branches to a height of twenty or thirty feet, divided into a fork and supported two platforms. A roughly-made ladder gave access to the first platform, the second being built several feet higher and forming the roof of the lower. The sides were constructed of bamboo and another species of cane, interlaced with bark. The roof was covered with grass and leaves, the whole forming one of the most unique habitations it is possible to imagine.

It was with some difficulty that the chief was persuaded to come down from his lofty perch, but eventually he did so, and agreed to help me to find carriers for another journey that I was planning. In spite of his bad reputation, he proved to be quite amiable, though he possessed to a marked degree the aborigine's characteristic of being unable, or unwilling, to look a white man in the face.

It was at Amana that I met the only half-witted person I ever saw in New Guinea. He was lighter in colour than other natives, and, besides being deaf, was strangely bent and thin, though he was supposed to be well on the right side of thirty. So far as I could

judge, he was allowed to exist solely on account of the amusement which he afforded the villagers, who made him dance for my benefit, though not at my desire. He was as greedy as a jackal, and whenever there was food about he would steal up and snatch morsels before one could say "Jack Robinson."

Leaving Amana, with extra carriers at my command, I set off on a five days' march to Mafulu, much of the route lying through dense forest, in which begonias, ferns, and creeping plants made a riot of colour, while cockatoos and parrots flashed here, there, and everywhere amid the luxuriant foliage. Of animal life there were strangely few signs, tree kangaroos being most in evidence.

Once more the food problem became acute, and I found myself taking a reef in my belt at too frequent intervals for my liking. A series of thefts contributed to the shortage, and the fact that I taxed some of the carriers with being the culprits only added to the prevailing discontent. Yams, sweet potatoes, and indifferently good bananas comprised our only fare for several days, by which time we were reduced to a very low state. This was more than annoying, because I was getting splendid specimens and was not at all anxious to leave such a good collecting district. However, I had to give my promise to a deputation of carriers to leave within a week, the "boys" threatening to desert in a body if I refused. Two days later their patience gave out. Hearing a sudden outcry, I rushed out of my fly-tent to find one of the native huts which the "boys" were occupying burning furiously, and in less than ten minutes the whole camp was one mass of flames.

I then discovered that they had taken this step fearing that I had no intention of keeping my promise, as that morning I had shown great delight at the success of my native collectors in securing some fine birds-of-paradise—a sign, they imagined, that I meant to stay on in the district. In many respects Papuans are lovable people, but there is an aspect of their character that sorely tries the temper of even the most patient and forbearing of travellers.

The journey back to the coast was memorable chiefly for the welcome discovery at one point of some tree-cabbage. The leaves grow on a small tree not unlike a sycamore. They are tied up in bundles and placed on heated stones, after which they are covered with banana leaves, on top of which more hot stones are placed. Cooking takes about an hour, at the end of which time the traveller has before him a dish which even in a civilized country would be highly esteemed. Never have I enjoyed a meal more than I did on this occasion!

"THE WATER WAGON."

In the interior of the Philippine Islands methods of transportation are still very primitive. The photograph here reproduced shows a little Filipino boy who has been down to the village well with the family buffalo, drawing a wheel-less contraption of bamboo poles, to fetch the day's water-supply. This is carried in the oil-drum — the most up-to-date part of the equipment — seen perched on the cross-piece of the "vehicle."

The COUGHLIN KIDNAPPING CASE

by

Katherine Mayo

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. ROBINSON.

The previous instalments of this remarkable story related how the baby son of Mr. and Mrs. Coughlin was kidnapped by night. The Pennsylvania State Police were called in to assist, and it was decided that a man calling himself "The Crank" was the abductor. This man finally instructed the distracted father to take a certain train on a specified railroad and to throw out a bag containing a ransom at a spot where a white flag was displayed. By an elaborate system of zones and patrols, employing scores of trained men, the police were able to arrest the kidnapper directly he left his hiding-place to retrieve the bag. He proved to be a man named Pascal, but denied all knowledge of the baby's whereabouts, saying that he was merely acting for another man. YOU CAN NOW READ ON.

III.—(*Conclusion.*)

WHILE the interrogation of Pascal went on, seemingly fruitlessly, from another direction a gleam of light had broken. Searching the prisoner's house at New Gretna, an officer of the Force discovered, hidden beween the lining and the cloth of an old pair of trousers, a slip of paper bearing a sort of cryptogram—a string of letters and figures—JP 45 BW 1000 JPP 5 + 7 PP 1500, and so on.

Now, thanks to the Criminal Identification Bureau, one of the first fruits of Pascal's sojourn in State Police departmental headquarters had been his identification with a man variously known as Augusto Pasquale, John Pierre Pons, Julius Pons, and Harvey Williams, under which names he had served various prison terms for various serious offences.

From the cryptogram, plus this list, Gearhart, after a bit of thought, deduced a theory. With Gearhart's theory in hand, Mr. Holtby, of the Federal Postal Service Inspectors' Department, an untiring worker, sped to New York. Within twenty-four hours of the finding of the puzzle Holtby had run down the facts that it at once concealed and represented. Julius Pons, for example, had deposited a thousand dollars in the bank at Forty-Fifth Street and Broadway. Similarly, John Pierre Pons had deposited fifteen hundred dollars in the bank at 5 and 7, Park Place. And so on.

All of which information, by the way, Gearhart immediately gave to Mr. Coughlin, with the request that he would proceed at once to garnishee his money.

In the interval, Captain Gearhart had been working to discover just what cash Pascal had handled since July 14th, the date of the lifting of the twelve thousand dollars from the station at Swedeland.

He computed the expenditure in view at New Gretna—the property itself; the furniture in the house, for which Pascal had paid to the former owner one hundred and thirty-five dollars; the motor truck standing in the barn, just purchased for six hundred dollars; the two guns; the two dogs. Then he added the contribution of Private Gosselin, of "C" Troop, returning from New York with proof that Pascal had bought at a certain clothier's in that city two suits of clothes, at fifty dollars and eighty dollars; and that he had further purchased for known sums at a certain jeweller's a diamond and platinum ring, a scarf-pin, three watches, and other similar articles.

The total of all these, added to the amount of the various bank deposits, plus a likely allowance for running expenses in the

interval, fell short by just about a thousand dollars of the twelve thousand extorted from Mr. Coughlin as a ransom for his baby son.

"That," said Gearhart, "ends the theory of his having an accomplice. He has kept all or almost all the money himself. Would any accomplice work for nothing, or for merely a thousand dollars?"

He proceeded at once to confront the prisoner of Norristown Jail with the new evidence and the logical conclusion.

"I WILL TELL YOU THE TRUTH."

"Well—since you know; yes," said Pascal, "I did have some little hand in the kidnapping. But I never saw the baby. I will tell you now all the truth.

"I was sitting in a Chinese restaurant in Race Street, with Joe and a woman named Rose, when a lady with a thick veil over her face came in and beckoned to Joe. She and Joe talked. I heard Joe say:—

"'Nothing doing. Ten thousand dollars or nothing.'

"She said, 'All right.'

"Then Joe came back to us.

"'I'm going to do a little job,' he told me. 'I need your help. That lady is rich. Her son was killed in the war, so she wants a certain baby that is in Norristown. She wants us to get it for her. Afterwards she don't care if we scare money out of the baby's father on our own account. But she says we must hurry because the baby is sick, anyway, and if it dies she is going to send the body back to the parents. Of course we couldn't pull anything after she'd done that. We'll work together, August, and get some good money.'

"So we went next night to the Coughlins' house and tried to get in. But we could not. Two nights after, we went back again—me and Joe and Rose in Joe's car, the lady with the veil following in a limousine. We got a ladder from the house that is being built close by. Joe went into the house. I stood with a flashlight, watching. Joe brought the baby down. I flashed the light. The lady with the veil drove up, fast. She handed Joe the package with the ten thousand dollars and took the baby and drove off very fast again.

"Then Joe and I wrote the letters, but before Mr. Coughlin paid the twelve thousand dollars Joe got cold feet and quit. One time, though, just after I picked up the money, I came to my room and found Joe sitting there, and I gave him one thousand dollars just to make things square. Then we each had eleven thousand dollars. You have found what I did with that eleven thousand dollars."

"And where is the baby now, Pascal?" asked Gearhart.

"The lady gave him to Joe to keep. He is down in the swamp, near Egg Harbour. Joe and Rose have him there in a house. I saw the baby the day before you arrested me. Why, Joe was walking around with me all that day, right up to the time I went to hang the flag."

Under cover of night they took him to Egg Harbour. At early dawn they brought him into the swamp, to the spot where "Joe's" house should stand.

But there was no house to be found.

"Well, since you see—I lied," admitted Pascal. "I needed time. I have to think."

All that last day, he had affirmed, Joe was with him, "right up to the time I went to hang the flag."

But Corporals Snodgrass and Haines had another tale to tell. Inch by inch these two had traced and checked his movements during that same last day. And now their completed picture showed him, early in the morning, at the New Gretna post-office, boarding a "jitney" 'bus; later, at Tuckerton, where his nervous fingers drummed on the station window-ledge as he bought his ticket for Camden; then, still in Tuckerton, in Brown's Hotel, where he talked about his bulldog while laying in a supply of cigarettes and several glasses of beer; then in the dry-goods store where, growling at the price, he bought his white sheet and some Spearmint gum. Then to Camden, and so back to Egg Harbour Station. Thence he proceeded on foot up the railway track toward Ellwood, his parcel under his arm. And always, everywhere, the picture showed him alone.

City and State Police together, hunting Philadelphia's Chinatown through, found "Rose"—and discarded her. She existed—she was there—but she had nothing to do with the case. As to "Joe," the Force took no stock in him at all. It is exceedingly difficult, it appears, to give a physical description of a man you have never seen, to add to that description a past history, and then, at successive intervals, to repeat your statement not only with accuracy, but without hesitation. So difficult that, bit by bit, through many and separate statements, Pascal unwittingly conferred upon his "Joe" a combination of characteristics so curious that, as Captain Gearhart said:—

"'Joe' must look like a Christmas tree."

Not in the least did it trouble Pascal to be caught lying. From the very moment of his capture he had proved himself the finest master of the art that, in all its rich experience, the Force had ever known. Nothing really jolted him out of his self-confidence. If he was, by some swift surprise, shaken in his calm, never did he permit himself either to speak or act till his poise had fully returned. Every nerve was always alert for whatever might come. And, each time a lie was proved upon him, gracefully, easily would he admit as a lie that which was proved such—just that and no more.

Then he would tell another story, in which

a grain of truth lay somewhere embedded—just enough to give it the elusive spine of verisimilitude that his cause required.

Off, then, went the Force on a fresh hunt to prove or disprove the tale. But if "The Crank" gained time thereby, so did the Force gain, if only by elimination, inch by inch nearing that goal that it was vowed to touch.

THE POLICE THEORY.

Meantime the officers had their own theory as to what had happened to poor little Blakeley Coughlin. They believed the crime to have been committed solely with the intention of getting money. They believed that Pascal alone, without any confederate, having spied out the land on a previous night, had come into the neighbourhood of the ridge cottage on the midnight of the kidnapping. That there, from the vantage-ground of the high road embankment, screened by the Coughlins' hedge, and profiting by the household habit of leaving curtains undrawn, he had watched till the last light went out. He had then gone to a neighbouring building under construction and thence had taken a ladder and an old black coat. Having brought that ladder into the Coughlin garden, he had placed it against the nursery window, staying its foot with a heavy flower-box that chanced to stand near by. Then he himself, and no other, had mounted the ladder and, by the aid of the flooding moonlight, had carefully surveyed the little room in which the baby lay, noting with satisfaction the closed door beyond. Panther-like, he had stolen across the room to the crib and, drawing the baby up into his arms, had rolled it in that old black coat. When the little helpless thing instinctively cried out at the strange touch, he had clapped a hand on its mouth and throat and kept it there while he glided back to the window, noiseless except for the creak of the cribside as he lifted himself erect with the child in his arms—and so down the ladder and swiftly away in the dark.

And they believed that the baby, because of the kidnapper's necessity to keep him silent, had died of suffocation within two minutes of the time when his mother had started at the sound of his one cry—that tiny, broken fragment of a baby's wail.

The Force held the theory in its inner mind, but it did not lay its belief before the prisoner. To betray to him a mistaken opinion, to tax him with anything but an absolute fact, was to provoke him to laughter, to stimulate in him a spirit of success that delayed the game.

So Major Adams, endlessly pondering, endlessly experimenting, borrowed a page from Muensterberg and tried the "word-association test." First, then, he compiled a list of some fifty words in no way, to his knowledge, connected with the crime—"harmless words." Then he said to the prisoner, frankly :—

"Now I am going to test you. You must play fair. I shall pronounce a series of words. After each word I shall pause and you, at once and without hesitation, will answer with the first word that comes into your mind."

Behind the prisoner, as the test began, sat an officer holding, unseen, a split-second watch.

"Sky," said the Major.

"Blue," responded Pascal.

"Pavement," said the Major.

"Street," said Pascal.

And so, as they proceeded down the "harmless" fifty, the man with the stop-watch determined Pascal's "normal speed" in word-association.

That speed once established, the Major began on a fresh list.

"Crime," said the Major.

Twice the normal interval elapsed. Then said the prisoner: "Stealing."

Now the subject of the test is naturally under the impression that his chosen word carries the evidence; whereas that evidence is held to lie not in the word itself, but in the interval elapsing between question and response. An interval above the normal shows a pause, on a dangerous word, for thought and substitution. At the word "crime," for instance, the kidnapper stops to seek a word other than that first in his mind—kidnapping.

After another string of "harmless" words—

"Flower," said the Major.

Three times the normal time did Pascal pause, then—

"Rose," said he.

"Church," said the Major.

"Religion," came back, promptly.

"Steam," said the Major.

"Pressure," as promptly.

"Box," said the Major. And the prisoner stuck again.

A flower-box had held the foot of the ladder beneath the window of the baby's room.

And "ladder" and "overcoat" and "hole," too, bothered him—"hole" very particularly. But "slag-dump" stayed him not at all.

Now certain of the State Police officers had felt that the man's likeliest disposition of a little dead child would be to throw it upon one of those great, always-burning mountains of wastage that dot the country about Norristown, there to be quickly and utterly consumed.

"It was not in a slag-dump," said the Major, after his test. "But somewhere in this story there is some sort of a hole."

And so the days ran into weeks, and the prisoner continued his equable patter.

"Behind the prisoner, as the test began, sat an officer holding, unseen, a split-second watch."

Sometimes his latest "confession" of "the whole truth" would convey a definite possibility of proof, pro or con—proof that the baby was dead, proof that the baby lived. Then the Force, at top speed, would hunt it down—but still to draw a blank.

And always, all over the country, sprang up more dreamers of dreams as to where the baby lay concealed; more reports of babies seen in dubious hands—babies answering the description of the missing child; more blackmailing claimants of a price for the baby's life. Always the Force, in the several troops, lived on the hunt—the secret hunt. And in that process it quietly wiped many a criminal off the list of public dangers.

Meantime, public interest in the matter never flagged and the persistence of Pascal in his silence, as in his lies, aroused an echo of public wrath.

"Make an end of this. Feed him on nothing but salt fish. Let him eat salt fish or starve. Then give him nothing to drink—not a drop of anything at all—till he shows you that baby, alive or dead," wrote one woman to the Department of State Police.

But the State Police do not work that way.

Also, they firmly believed that their only route to knowledge of the baby's fate lay through the mind of the prisoner. Upon their skill in handling that super-sensitive, wholly erratic element depended all that lay at stake. Obstinacy would have been his logical response to rough handling, to any show of pressure.

Curiously enough, the thing that operated to change Pascal's indifferent, careless, sometimes even snarlingly contemptuous bearing, was the discovery that the Sheriff had attached his house, his bank-account, his jewellery—all he had thought he possessed. With the coming of that news his nerve wilted. Thenceforward he sat quiet. To questions, by whomsoever put, he answered or did not answer, as seemed to him good.

And now they left him almost alone. Day and night a State Police trooper sat at the door of his cell, but no one appeared to question or to see him. No news reached him in any shape. Nothing came from anywhere to give his extra-active brain fresh fruit for thought.

ALONE WITH HIS THOUGHTS.

So, just as they of the Force had calculated, that mind began to grind upon itself. The man burned with anxiety to know how much his captors had found out. Their absence, their silence, tortured him. He conceived the idea that he might be tried for murder. Then, increasingly, he dwelt, in his solitude, on a punishment other than that appointed by law—a punishment sometimes dispensed by a furious public to the author of a revolting crime.

"Beg them to take me to Philadelphia!" he pleaded to the trooper at the door. For he feared a storming of Norristown Jail.

The trooper made no reply.

"Are there many people in the street outside?"

"Sometimes. Very many."

"*Why do they come?*"

No reply.

And all the while the mother and father of the missing child dwelt in an uncertainty more terrible than any knowledge.

Hope, for them, had come to mean hope that their little one had passed beyond the reach of pain. In each sight or story of living misery that came to their ken, they saw a picture of what their baby might now be. Yet, to the unending admiration and respect of their daily co-workers, the officers of the Force, they dominated every personal impulse, and, like true gentlefolk, *played the game.*

A MOTHER'S ORDEAL.

One day, when the silence had long endured, Mrs. Coughlin said to Gearhart :—

"I have a hope that if I were to go into his cell and ask him myself—I, the baby's mother—he might be moved to pity."

"*Can* you do it ?" asked Gearhart.

She only looked her reply.

"I know," said the Captain. "Forgive me."

That night, near midnight, he escorted her to the jail.

They gave her, for the ordeal, a private room. Gearhart, concealed behind a screen, remained with her. The sentinel and the warden awakened Pascal from his sleep and, without explanation, thrust him into her presence. Themselves retiring, they closed the door.

That awful encounter the prisoner took without one flicker. Calm and circumspect, he answered the young mother's pleading—and finally her tears.

"Only tell me where you have put his poor little body !" she begged. "Only let me know that my baby is safely dead !"

"'Only tell me where you have put his poor little body,' she begged."

"I did not take him. I never had him. Joe had him. He is alive," he persisted.

And though once his throat muscles began to knot and break, and once his voice trembled—which perceiving, her hope strung tense—in an instant he had caught his composure back again, renewing the old tale.

But from that moment his worst fear, short of the dread of mob violence, was lest he should again be forced to face the mother of the child.

"*Don't* make me see her! *Don't* let her see me!" he would entreat in his terror, forgetting for once the implication in the words.

Then silence, solitude, once more engulfed him. Barren day and lonely night, the wheel of his thought laboured on, unfed, grinding ever nearer to the raw quick of his soul.

"Have you any light?" the mother would ask the authorities.

"No," came the answer, day after day. "But it's coming."

The sentinel reported that his prisoner slept less and less, that he murmured uneasily in his snatches of unconsciousness, and that the fear of lynching grew visibly in his mind. It was practically an obsession now. In his nervousness he talked more and more to that unresponsive trooper guard.

"I could tell you lots of things if I wanted to," he would say.

"I am not forcing you," answered the trooper, unmoved.

"I would like to shave."

"I have nothing to do with that."

"But listen, then: About five years ago I shot a Polish fellow. We had been drinking together, pretty hard. He was going to hit me with a bottle, and I pulled my gun and shot him. A second fellow came, and I shot him, too. I didn't stop to see if they were dead. Maybe I killed them both."

No comment.

"Well"—querulously—"what do you say to that?"

"I say," said the trooper, dryly, "that that may be so and may not be so."

"But you *know* a man isn't going to tell you he killed somebody when he didn't!"

"I know, Pascal, that you are the most tireless liar I ever saw."

"Yes"—sighed Pascal—"yes."

Silence again. No effect from his story. Day after day no visit, nor word from without, while he tore at himself with the question:—

"What have they found out? How much do they really know?"

At last—it was on the 10th of October that it happened—there came news. Pascal desired to see the Commanding Officer of the Pennsylvania State Police Force, Major Adams himself.

The trooper at the cell door conveyed that request to Captain Gearhart, conducting the case. Captain Gearhart, judging that the hour might be ripe and that wisdom might indicate humouring its trend, in his turn relayed the message to Harrisburg. Major Adams, at the word, betook himself from Harrisburg to Norristown Jail just as quick as wheels could speed him.

Pascal, as the Major entered the cell, rose from the chair at the foot of his cot. His swarthy Italian colour was gone now, leaving a sort of transparent, aqueous, yellow-white. His black, wide-set eyes had lost their size and their glitter. Now they seemed small and brown and rather dim. His hard-cut mouth had disappeared under a moustache, and a beard concealed the aggressive outline of his jaw. His long, slender hands looked weak.

"You may sit down," said the Major, seating himself. "What have you to say?"

"I wish to confess."

The Major showed no interest. "Very well," he responded, indifferently.

"I wish to confess. Last June in Philadelphia, I killed a woman. I hit her with a piece of slate—and she died. It was——"

The Major cut him short. "I have no desire to hear more of that," he said. "Just one thing is wanted from you. When you are ready you may tell me what you did to the Coughlins' baby. Till you are willing to do just that, you need say nothing at all."

"But the woman——"

"The woman does not matter now."

The prisoner looked at the floor, while his long, thin fingers, hanging together between his knees, twined over and around each other nervously. He wetted his lips, looking down, and cleared his throat faintly, like one far gone in fever.

PASCAL'S CONFESSION.

When at last he resumed speech it was in a voice so low that at times it trailed to the very verge of silence. And—as if his mind had made for itself a permanent dwelling-place there—he started, without prelude or explanation, at the climax of his crime.

"I wanted to find out how to get through the window. I went to the house that was building. I thought they had some ladder. I got the ladder. I found a coat there and I put that coat on my shoulders to keep the weight off. I got inside the room——"

"What did you put against the foot of the ladder to brace it, when you set the ladder at the window?" Adams interjected.

"A flower-box that stood there. As I got inside—the baby"—here he stopped, wetted his lips again; then resumed the narrative with difficulty. "The baby started to cry—not much—but I—wrapped him up in the coat and—and—set him against my breast.

"I came down the ladder. As soon as I got down I heard someone talking inside

the house. So I started to run—across the road—past all the houses—out across the fields. And as soon as I dared I stopped and opened up the coat and—looked—looked at the baby—and—it was passed—gone."

The man's voice, nearing those last words, had almost vanished. The corners of his mouth seemed suddenly vague—powerless. He lifted his eyes like a creature in agonies of pain, almost spent with exhaustion, dumbly appealing for pity. Yet in a flash, as if unable to bear another human being's gaze, he looked down again.

"You mean," asked Adams, "that the baby, when you looked at him, under the coat, was dead?"

"Yes, sir—I had it—pressed up against—my breast——"

"You didn't intend to kill the baby?" Adam's tone was very quiet, very gentle, conveying neither judgment nor heat. He might have been some patient, sagacious, deeply experienced physician, listening without surprise to a tale as old as human ills.

"You did not intend to kill the baby?"

"No, sir." The words came almost in a sob.

"What were you going to do with him?"

"I was going to put it at Swedeland—to get a room and take the baby there."

"What did you do when you found the baby was dead?"

"I—I took it down to the river and—and—threw it in."

"Where?"

"About two miles from there."

"Threw it out in the current where the water could carry it away?"

"No—it didn't carry it away."

"Do you think it could be found now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why?"

"Because—I put a piece of rail—from the railroad—a piece I found—put it——"

"Put it in the baby's nightdress?" suggested the Major, when the speaker's voice once more faded into silence, as if before the horror of his inner mind.

"No—I—I burned the nightdress. So he was—naked—I tied him to the rail with a piece of cord—wound it around him and tied it at his neck and his feet. Then I threw him in."

"Can you take us to the place where you threw the baby in?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is enough for now," said the Major.

Again the prisoner rose, following his visitor with his eyes as he left the cell. A confessed murderer and worse, his appearance disconcertingly conflicted with his just-told tale.

"Now," said Adams, when the cell-door had swung shut, "I believe that we have the truth at last!"

THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

In the small hours next morning, while it was still dark, clouding for rain, Captain Gearhart appeared in Norristown Jail and went to Corporal Snodgrass, standing before Pascal's door.

"I'm going to handcuff him to you, Corporal, and take him out."

"To the spot?" asked the prisoner.

"Yes."

"Is the baby's mother coming? No! *No! no!* Don't let her be there! *Don't,*" he begged.

"Mrs. Coughlin is *not* to come," said Gearhart quietly.

A quarter of a mile away, up a dark lane in the sleeping town, they found Mr. Coughlin waiting in a car. At once they set forth for the cottage on the ridge.

"We want you to get your bearings," said Gearhart, as they neared the Coughlins' home. "Do you know where you are?"

"Yes," answered Pascal. "I see the house."

"Where did you go from here?"

Following his statement step by step, they dropped down into the flat country and there, in an open field, left the car.

Starting now on foot, they followed the railroad track for three or four minutes in silence.

"Do you know where you are?" asked Gearhart again.

The prisoner hesitated, vainly trying to pluck forth landmarks from the thick concealment of the night.

Then a weird thing happened. Out of the darkness bloomed a sudden flower of flame—a great red glow, which endured a few seconds and was gone. By the light of that glow stood revealed, just ahead, the jaws of an abyss—a deep rock-cut, gaping black as the mouth of the pit.

"There!" came the voice of the prisoner, choking, gasping, half-whisper, half-scream. "*There!*" and he seemed about to drop in his tracks. "I—walked through—*that*—with him hugged dead in my arms! Ah! The hole! The hole!"

"Do you remember anything beyond? At the spot itself?"

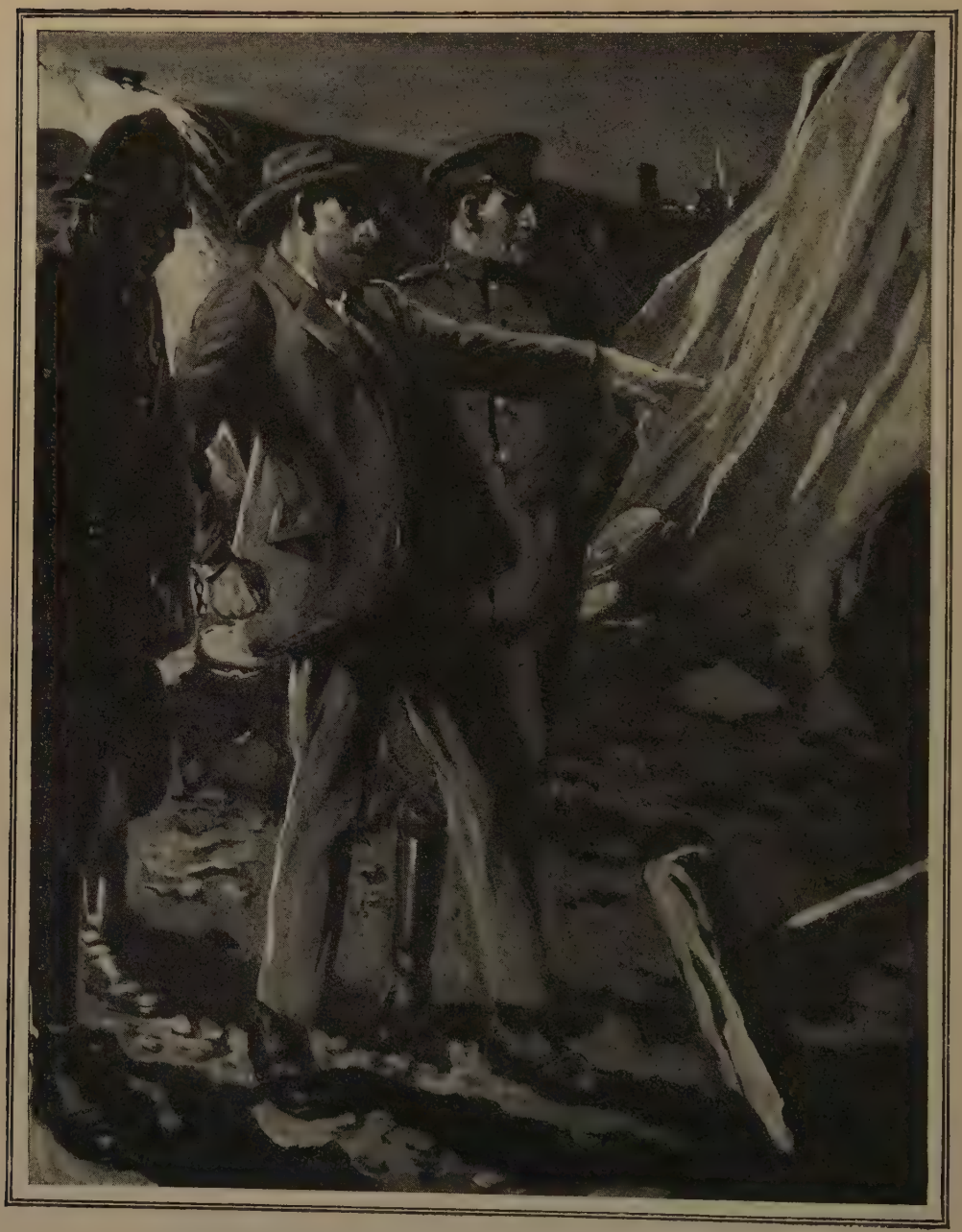
For a moment no answer, save the man's dry, shivering sob. Then:—

"Beyond—by the river. There was a high bush——"

As they felt their way through the depths of the cut, Snodgrass, close-bound to the prisoner as he was, wrist by wrist, felt him staggering, swaying, trembling—his whole body rent as with an ague.

Once again, as they emerged upon open track, that swift unearthly tide flushed the sky—reflection from the flow of molten dross spilled upon some mountainous slag-dump like red-hot lava.

"This is the place," breathed Pascal. And the man who stood manacled to him,



"'There!' came the voice of the prisoner, choking, gasping."

staring down horrified into the face revealed by that strange light, thought he had never seen such a look before on any human countenance.

Straight, without wavering, he led them into an old quarry, to a pile of railroad iron, whence, he said, he had taken his piece of rail. Again, unhesitatingly, to the place where he found the cord. Then, by a little path among the weeds to the brink of the river, murmuring unseen.

At the path's end, at the river's brink, printed out black upon the night, stood one high bush.

"That is where I stood and threw the baby in," said August Pascal.

That morning, once more in his cell, and with Corporal Snodgrass for his only hearer, he laboured again and again through the detailed story—as if he must cast out every smallest memory by the spell of spoken words.

"... The night of the kidnapping I came from near Germantown on the trolley. I stood on the bank opposite the house and watched the father and mother come and stand by the baby's bed. All the curtains were up. Then I saw them go into their room and go to bed. I lay in a cornfield near the house, waiting for them to get quiet. I went to sleep. When I waked up, the house was all dark. I crept over to the new place, got the ladder and coat. Then I climbed the ladder and looked in—and made sure of all inside. I got the baby—slipped him very gently out from under the sheet. He was very easy to lift; he was asleep—My God! I *didn't* mean to kill that baby—but he made a little cry. ... I sat down on the edge of the river with the baby on my knees—holding him in the coat. ... I didn't know what to do. ... I held that baby as long as I dared, trying to think. It began to get daylight. ... I didn't want to put him in the ground ... didn't want the earth to touch him. So I got the rail and the cord and I stripped the nightdress off—and burned the nightdress there by the track—then wound the cord around him, and tied him neck and foot to the rail (how I hated that!) —and—I threw him in. Oh, this must be fierce for Mr. Coughlin!"

Said Snodgrass:—

"You should have thought of that before."

"Well," querulously, "but what is a fellow to do? I wanted money. I had to have money, didn't I? I have scarcely ever worked in my life. I only meant to keep the baby till I got the few dollars. God knows I never meant to kill the child. I didn't *want* to kill him. He was a fine child. But what was I to do?"

Exactly in the spot that Pascal had indicated—right there, in the river, within five or six feet of the bank, the diver found all that was left to find—the rail with the cord tied at either end. There it lay on the soft bottom, where it had lain since June 2nd, while the moving waters of the Schuylkill, performing their natural action, dissolved all that had been human shape.

They could not indict him for first degree murder, because, at the time of the enactment of the law declaring murder in connection with a felony to be murder in the first degree, kidnapping had not yet become a felony. But they indicted him for second degree murder, kidnapping, burglary, and extortion.

On November 17th, brought before Judge A. S. Swartz for a trial that lasted perhaps two hours, he pleaded guilty.

On November 20th, Judge Swartz gave August Pascal twenty years in prison for second degree murder, and life imprisonment for kidnapping, openly lamenting the freak of law that forbade the extreme penalty.

And—is it strange?—Pascal lamented it, too.

"I wanted to be electrocuted," he complained.

"Simply because he is jail-wise," said Gearhart. "He knows that his life will be made a curse to him by his fellow-prisoners. Even the most confirmed criminal revolts from a baby-killer."

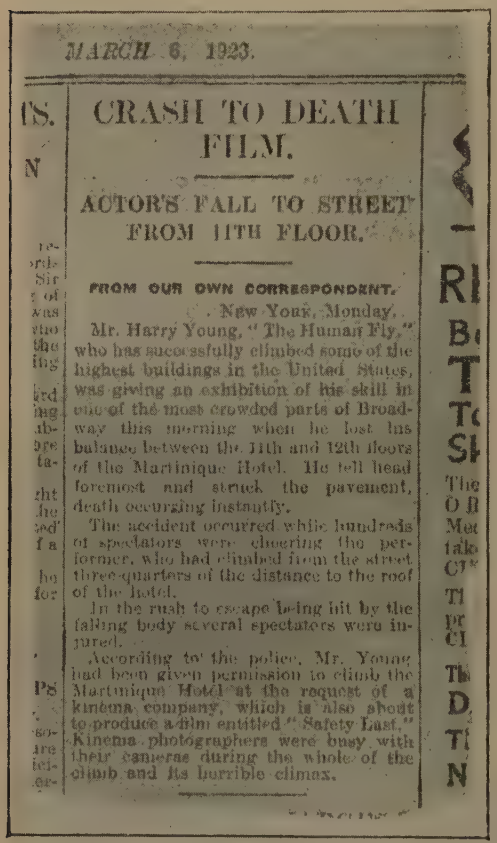
A STUDY IN REFLECTIONS.

HERE is a remarkable study in reflections, reproduced just as it was photographed and without any "touching up" of any kind. The photograph was taken at Sylvan Lake, South Dakota, U.S.A., and shows the reflections of the hills and rocks mirrored with wonderful fidelity in the still surface of the lake. By turning the picture sideways—either way—several remarkable faces and figures will be seen. The whole thing reminds one of the "ink-blot pictures" which, folded down the centre and then opened again, frequently reveal very similar images.

ODDS AND ENDS.

"THE HUMAN FLY."

Our readers will remember that in our issue for April, 1922, we published an article entitled "The Human Fly," describing and illustrating the amazing performance of one Jack Williams, otherwise known as "The Human Fly." This man adopted a most extraordinary and perilous profession—the scaling of lofty buildings with no other equipment than his own fingers and



MARCH 6, 1923.

CRASH TO DEATH FILM.

ACTOR'S FALL TO STREET FROM 11TH FLOOR.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

New York, Monday.

Mr. Harry Young, "The Human Fly," who has successfully climbed some of the highest buildings in the United States, was giving an exhibition of his skill in one of the most crowded parts of Broadway this morning when he lost his balance between the 11th and 12th floors of the Martinique Hotel. He fell head foremost and struck the pavement, death occurring instantly.

The accident occurred while hundreds of spectators were cheering the performer, who had climbed from the street three-quarters of the distance to the roof of the hotel.

In the rush to escape being hit by the falling body several spectators were injured.

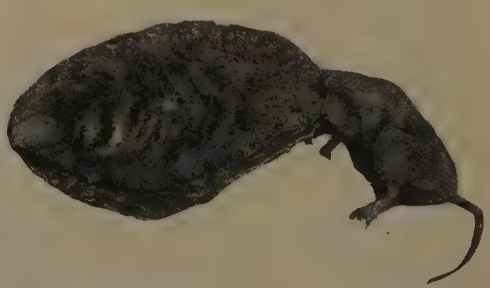
According to the police, Mr. Young had been given permission to climb the Martinique Hotel at the request of a kinema company, which is also about to produce a film entitled "Safety Last." Kinema photographers were busy with their cameras during the whole of the climb and its horrible climax.

toes. Our article described how, in San Francisco, this iron-nerved man climbed a building four hundred feet high and hung head-downwards from the flagstaff on the summit.

Apparently Jack Williams has his competitors even in such a hazardous trade, for the attached cutting, which we reproduce from the London *Daily Mail* of March 6, 1923, sets forth the appalling fate which befell one Harry Young, likewise calling himself "The Human Fly," while climbing the front of a New York Hotel on behalf of a kinema company.

THE "PICTURE-FRAME TREE."

Here is a photograph of a freak of Nature to be seen in the San Bernardino Mountains, near Skylands, California. This is an old sycamore, the contorted limbs of which—apparently quite unassisted by man—have grown in such a curious fashion as to earn the well-deserved name of the "picture-frame tree."



AN OYSTER AS A MOUSETRAP.

"This picture," writes a correspondent, "was sent to me by a friend living in Kent. It appears that one night some oysters were placed on the floor of a cellar to keep cool. During the night, presumably, the oysters 'opened up,' to have a look round. An inquisitive mouse ventured to investigate, with the result seen in the photograph."

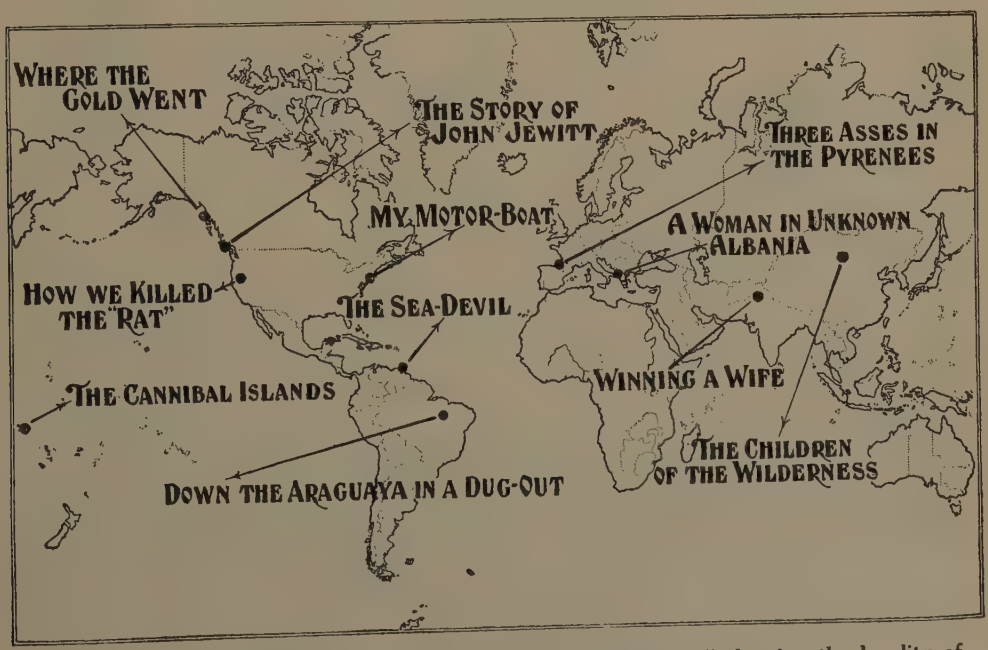
OUR WORST CRITICS.

THE worst critics of THE WIDE WORLD are the people who have never read it, and you would be doing a real kindness to those misguided folks, and to us, if you would lend one of them a copy. You probably won't get it back; but that, of course, is a detail.

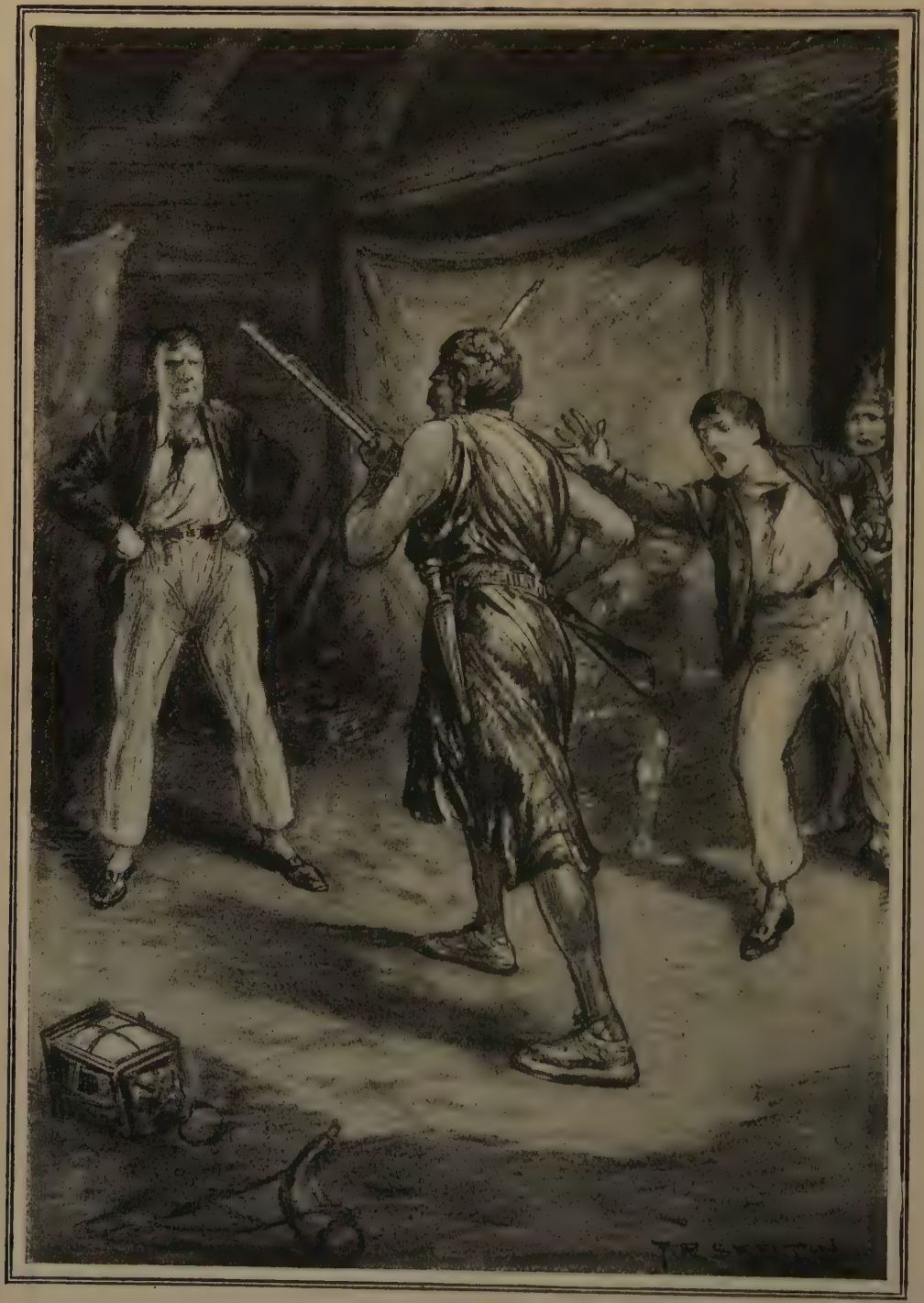
If you show him this issue, ask him if he has ever read a more amazing tale than "The Story of John Jewitt," or two more fascinating travel articles than "The Cannibal Islands" and "The Children of the Wilderness."

Old Father Hubbard he went to the cupboard
To get out the mag. that he reads,
But the cupboard was bare, and *didn't* he swear!
—"I haven't seen MAN AND HIS NEEDS!"

The Editor


WHERE THE GOLD WENT
THE STORY OF JOHN JEWITT
THREE ASSES IN THE PYRENEES
MY MOTOR-BOAT
A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA
HOW WE KILLED THE "RAT"
THE SEA-DEVIL
THE CANNIBAL ISLANDS
WINNING A WIFE
THE CHILDREN OF THE WILDERNESS
DOWN THE ARAGUAYA IN A DUG-OUT

The remarkable contents-map of "The Wide World Magazine," showing the locality of every article and story in this splendid number.



"MAQUINNA WAS IN THE ACT OF RAISING THE GUN TO SHOOT."

(SEE PAGE 260.)

The STORY OF JOHN JEWITT

A most remarkable narrative, reminiscent of Louis de Rougemont and Robinson Crusoe, unearthed by the Author from the official archives of British Columbia. In 1802, at the age of eighteen, John Jewitt, of Hull, left England in the ship *Boston* to seek adventure. He was not long in finding it! Arrived off the coast of Vancouver Island, the captain began trading with the Indians, who, watching their opportunity, murdered the whole of the crew with the exception of Jewitt and another man, who became the slaves of the chief. This story, drawn from Jewitt's own diary—a copy of which is in the B.C. Provincial Museum—and the accounts of contemporary historians, describes the amazing experiences that befell the young man before he was finally rescued and restored to his parents, who had mourned him as dead.

by

N. de Bertrand Lugrin

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

JOHN JEWITT was born in Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1783, and—like many another English lad—had a deep and passionate love of the sea.* His father, who was a blacksmith by trade and a prosperous man, intended to make a surgeon of John, and he was given a good preliminary education at a school near Boston, and later apprenticed to a doctor. But John had no fondness for the vocation his father had chosen; he liked work in the blacksmith shop far better, and every spare moment found him there. When his father later on moved to Hull and enlarged his business, having a great deal of work to do on the numerous vessels that came into port, John begged so hard to be allowed to give up his medical studies and follow his father's trade that he was finally permitted to do so. Then began four years of fascinating work among the ships, where John made the acquaintance of sailors from every clime, and listened to their marvellous tales of romance and tragedy. The love of the sea that was inbred in the boy grew, under such a stimulus, to an insistent demand, and he longed with all his heart to become a sailor himself and set off for foreign lands to seek adventure.

One summer day an American ship, the *Boston*, from Boston, Massachusetts, commanded by Captain John Salter, arrived in Hull to take on board a cargo of goods suitable for trading with the Indians, for the *Boston* was bound for the north-west coast of America, where she expected to get a rich load of furs and skins. Captain Salter was a jovial man, well-liked by everyone who knew him, and a most eloquent story-teller. His ship needed repairs, which took some time, and he used to spend his evenings with Mr. Jewitt. Over their pipes and beer he would relate hair-raising accounts of his experiences by land and sea. An absorbed listener on these occasions was young John, who drank in every word, ardent longing writ large in his deep blue eyes. One night, having finished a particularly thrilling tale, the Captain smilingly placed his hand on the lad's head.

"How old are you, John?" he asked.

"Eighteen," replied John.

"Jewitt," said the Captain, "you'd better let your boy come with me on this trip. I'll take good care of him."

Jewitt Senior, however, was not enthusiastic. He thought John too young to go

* John Rodger Jewitt, son of Edward and Catherine Jewitt, was christened in the Parish Church at Boston on June 19, 1783. He is believed to have lived in Goodbarn's Yard, Wormgate, Boston.

a-wandering, but the Captain's persuasions and his son's entreaties finally carried the day.

Accordingly when, on September 3rd, 1802, the ship *Boston* set sail she carried on board as armourer young John Jewitt, as proud a lad as ever shipped. He stood on the deck, tall and straight, with the light of adventure in his eyes, and waved "good-bye" to his father until he was out of sight. Little did he dream what was to befall him e'er he saw his parents or the friendly shores of old England again!

After the initiation of several days' sea-sickness, John found himself, as he expressed it in his diary, "in uncommonly fine health and spirits." He went to work at his forge, putting muskets in order, repairing tools, and making daggers, knives, and small hatchets for the trade with the Indians.

Captain Salter, according to Jewitt, was an excellent seaman, who preserved the strictest discipline on board his ship, though he allowed every indulgence to his men consistent with the performance of their duty. Only one stop was made—at St. Catherine's Island, off the coast of Brazil—and it took them six months in all to reach their destination. John's excitement and eagerness may be imagined when at last land hove in sight, and he realized that he was to meet for the first time with the savages about whom so many blood-curdling stories had been told.

From an [*old print.*

King Maquinna.

It was the middle of March, and the weather was bright and clear, when they reached the coast of British Columbia. Slipping into the entrance of Nootka Sound, on the western side of Vancouver Island, they came upon a lovely inland waterway. The long ocean roll was left behind, and in this sheltered passage the water was like a mirror reflecting the surrounding hills, the highest of which still wore their winter mantle of snow. On the shores of the small islands dotted here and there the waves broke almost without a ripple. Sea-gulls, ravens, and Siwash ducks flew in clouds alongside and above the ship; and flocks of cormorants, black as night, seemed suddenly to appear from nowhere at all.

The *Boston* came to anchor about half a mile from the coast on the western side of a small bay, near an island which protected the little harbour from the sea. Early the next morning a canoe was observed putting off from shore toward the ship. In the canoe was the native king, Maquinna by name, and a number of his chiefs.

KING MAQUINNA.

According to John's diary Maquinna was a man of dignified aspect, extremely straight and well-proportioned; his features were good and his face was rendered remarkable by a large Roman nose. His complexion was of a dark copper hue, though on this particular occasion his face, legs, and arms were so covered with red paint that their natural colour was well-nigh hidden. His long, black hair, which shone with oil, was fastened in a bunch on top of his head and sprinkled all over with white down, which gave him a most extraordinary appearance. He was dressed in a large mantle or cloak of black, shining sea-otter skin, a magnificent garment reaching to his knees and fastened around his waist by a broad belt. He presented a picture of savage grandeur, and held himself with a fine regal air. His men wore mantles of woven cedar bark, gay with ornamentation in brilliant colours and reaching below the knee.

Maquinna bore an excellent reputation among the traders of the coast, who trusted him and treated him more or less as a friend, while the tribes farther north from Nootka were greatly feared, as their ferocity was well-known. It was without the slightest hesitation, therefore, that Captain Salter permitted the natives to come aboard the ship, insisting merely that they came unarmed.

John Jewitt immediately became an object of interest to the visiting Indians, for weapons and tools of iron and steel were very rare among them. On every occasion when they visited the ship they at once crowded around the boy, who was quite willing to display his skill at the forge. Even Maquinna singled him out for special attention.

The crew greatly enjoyed the delicious fresh salmon which the Indians brought them, and in return for their friendliness Captain Salter invited the king and some of his chiefs to dine with him. After the lengthy repast was over all withdrew except Maquinna and the Captain, who had a long talk together. So much valuable information did the king give the Captain that the latter, as a token of appreciation, presented him with a double-barrelled fowling-piece.

By the twenty-second of the month, as they had now taken on board all the wood and water necessary, the Captain announced that the ship would sail for the north the following morning. Owing to Maquinna's persuasions, however, he consented to

remain for another day, the king promising that, if he did so, he would see to it that the *Boston* was stocked with enough ducks, geese, and fresh fish to last until her return.

Without the slightest misgiving Captain Salter invited the king and his chiefs to a final dinner-party on the ship, and sent the chief mate off, with nine men, to fish in Friendly Cove for an hour or so. Even the steward was absent, having gone to the creek to finish the Captain's washing.

John watched the departure of the boats and then, having some muskets to clean, went below to his vice-bench. He had been there about an hour when he heard the men hauling in the longboat. Immediately following this there came terrible shrieking and screaming and general confusion on the deck.

THE MASSACRE.

"I ran up the stairs," writes John in his diary, "but scarcely was my head above deck when I was caught by one of the savages and lifted from my feet. Fortunately for me, my hair being short and the ribbon with which it was tied slipping, I fell from his hold down the stairs. As I was falling he struck me with an axe, which cut a deep gash in my forehead and penetrated the skull. But, in consequence of his losing his grip, I luckily escaped the full force of the blow, which otherwise must have cleft my head in two. I fell stunned and senseless to the floor.

"How long I lay there I do not know, but on coming to my senses I tried to get up. So weak was I from loss of blood, however, that I fainted and fell. Again I came to my senses, probably brought round by the triumphant shouts of the savages from the deck above, which convinced me in a moment that they must have possession of the ship.

"Recovering still further, I wiped the blood from my eyes and saw that the hatchway had been closed. This was done, I afterwards learned, by order of Maquinna who, on seeing the savage strike at me with the axe, told him not to hurt me, as I was the armourer and would be useful to them in repairing their arms; at the same time, to prevent any of his men from injuring me, he had the hatch closed. But to me this circumstance wore a very different appearance, for I thought that these barbarians had only prolonged my life in order to deprive me of it by the most hideous torture. I remained in this horrid state of suspense for some time, afraid to investigate, afraid even to try and find something to dress my wound, for fear of bringing the Indians upon me.

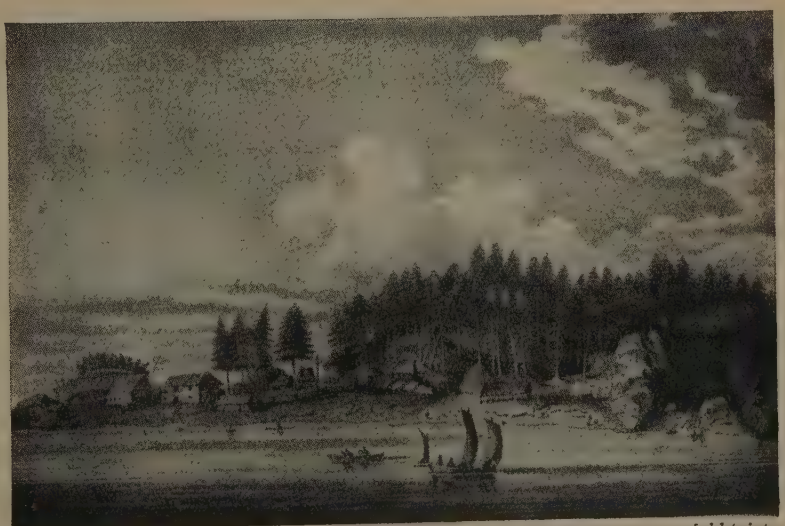
"At length the hatch was opened and Maquinna, calling me by name, ordered me to come up. I groped my way as well as I could, being almost blinded with the blood that began to flow again from my wound. The king, on perceiving the state I was in, ordered one of his men to bring water to wash the blood from my face, when I was able to see with one of my eyes, though the other was completely closed from the swelling.

"What a spectacle met my gaze! I very nearly fainted again at the sight. Six naked savages, standing in a circle around me and covered with the blood of my murdered comrades, leaned towards me, their eyes blazing, their daggers uplifted prepared to strike. I thought my last moment had come and breathed a brief prayer for the salvation of my soul.

"But the king, who knew enough English to make himself understood, thrust himself into the circle and, arresting the threatening daggers, placed himself before me.

JEWITT BECOMES A SLAVE.

"'John,' said he, 'I speak—you no say "No." You say "No"—daggers come.' He then asked if I would be his slave during my life, if I would fight for him in his battles and repair his muskets and daggers



From an old print.

Friendly Cove as it appeared at the time of Jewitt's capture.

and knives. There were various other questions, to all of which I promptly replied 'Yes.' He then stated that my life would be spared and bade me kiss his feet and hands in token of my submission, which I did.

"Very quickly I was made acquainted with the horrible details of what had taken place. Every member of our unfortunate crew had been murdered, and after getting possession of the ship the savages had broken open the arms-chest and magazine, and supplying themselves with ammunition and arms, sent a party on shore to attack our men who had gone to fish. Being joined by numbers from the village it was not a difficult matter to overpower and massacre them, all unarmed as they were. Their heads were then cut off and their bodies flung into the sea. These ghastly heads were taken aboard the ship and placed on the deck, which was covered with the blood of my poor comrades. The bodies of the rest of the crew, whose throats had been cut with their own jack-knives, lay close beside the heads. The poor fellows had been seized when they were hoisting in the boat, and in the scuffle which ensued the captain was thrown overboard and murdered by those in the canoes, who immediately cut off his head."

Seeing John's fainting condition Maquinna himself helped to bathe his wound and bandage it with a silk handkerchief, using a tobacco leaf, under the boy's directions, to staunch the flow of blood. Then, in spite of his weakness, John was commanded to get the ship under way for Friendly Cove.

This was a difficult matter enough, for John could only stagger about; but he cut the cables and sent some of the natives aloft to loosen the sails, which they succeeded in doing, albeit in a very bungling fashion. So the *Boston* was sailed into the Cove, where she was run on the beach at about eight o'clock that night.

Great was the joy in the village when Maquinna and his braves arrived, bringing their prisoner with them. Pine torches were lit and stuck around the houses, and a constant drumming was kept up all night, to the accompaniment of songs of jubilation.

John, who looked much younger than his eighteen years, at once became an object of sympathy to the wives of the king, who stroked his wounded head and patted his hands in token of friendship. Maquinna had nine wives, the chief of whom, according to John, was an unusually attractive young woman. When the majority of the savages clamoured for John to be put to death at once the pretty queen and the rest of the women begged that his life might be spared.

Nevertheless, that first night was a horrible one to the boy, for he fully expected to be murdered at any moment.

What was John's surprise and joy to learn, very early the following morning, that a white man had been found alive on the ship! One of the natives had gone aboard and had been attacked by a seaman who flung him to the deck and threatened to kill him, but he managed to get up and run away. John, who had seen all the murdered men, now remembered that Thompson, the sailmaker, was not among them. He further recalled that Thompson had been below with him shortly before the tragedy, at work on some repairs to the canvas. He made up his mind that the man on the ship must be Thompson, and he vowed to try and save him or die in the attempt.

Now Maquinna's little son and heir, Sat-sat-sok-sis, had already taken a great fancy to John. In fact he had remained with the injured youth all through the night, cuddled up beside him sound asleep, and John was glad of the companionship. When Maquinna ordered John to go to the beach to witness the capture and murder of the white man the little prince insisted upon accompanying him.

Down there on the wide stretch of white sand all the warriors of the tribe had assembled, and in their midst stood Maquinna, talking excitedly. At the conclusion of his harangue he asked them for their opinion as to whether the man on the ship should be put to death or not. They voted unanimously for death. Then John, whose mind had been diligently working out a scheme and who had already perceived that the Indians have a great love for the dramatic, ran through the crowd, dragging the prince with him, and flung himself at Maquinna's feet. He pointed to Sat-sat-sok-sis and asked the king if he loved his son. Maquinna nodded gravely. He then asked the prince if he loved his father and the prince said he did.

"I also love my father," cried John, "and I am sure that the white man on the ship is no other than he. If you kill him, then kill me also. I cannot live with him dead, even if I have to kill myself."

The Indian chief seemed much moved by John's entreaties, and finally told him to go aboard and order the man to come ashore. No harm should be done him for the present, he promised.

Thompson's delight at seeing John was no less than that of the boy. The sailmaker could readily pass as John's father, being well past forty and quite grey. Maquinna met them at the water's edge and heard with evident satisfaction that not only was Thompson John's father but the ship's sailmaker as well, and would be able to make sails for the king's canoes.

Almost at once the natives began to dismantle the ill-fated *Boston*. They took out her cargo, stripped her of her sails and rigging, cut away the masts, and rendered her as complete a wreck as possible. The muskets, ammunition, cloth, blankets, and

"Six savages leaned towards me, their eyes blazing, their daggers uplifted to strike."

most of the cargo were deposited in the king's house, but John managed to secure some blankets for himself and Thompson, two or three blank account books, paper and writing materials, and a few books and tools. The two white men told each other it would only be a matter of a few weeks or months at the most before a ship would appear, and they could effect their escape. In the meantime they decided to make the best of things, thankful that it was springtime and that bright warm weather prevailed.

Both men lived in the king's house, which was a very large affair built after the style of all the Indian lodges, of very large posts roofed with cedar shakes and broad planks, upon which were laid great stones to keep the wind from misplacing them. The walls were of planks, and not particularly weatherproof.

There was but one entrance, and a long passage running the whole length of the building separated it into two compartments. In these divisions, which were not walled in or separated from one another in any way except by a mutual understanding, lived several families, each having its own fireplace made of stones. There were no chimneys, the smoke escaping through an opening in the roof, and the floor was the earth. Maquinna's house was about fourteen feet high at its loftiest point.

"The furniture of these people," wrote Jewitt, "is very simple and consists only of boxes in which they put their clothes, furs, and such things as they hold most valuable; tubs for keeping their provisions of spawn and blubber in; trays from which they eat; baskets for their dried fish, and bags made of bark matting, of which they also make their beds, spreading a piece of it upon the ground where they lie down and using no other bed covering than their garments. Their dress consists of but a single garment, the *kutsak*, which is a loose cloak or mantle reaching nearly to the feet. This is tied loosely over the right or left shoulder so as to leave the arms at full liberty. These garments are painted red with ochre, but the chiefs wear them of pale yellow, banded with sea-otter skin."

A few days after the murder of the *Boston's* crew, Jewitt and Thompson, to their almost frantic delight, saw two ships standing in for Friendly Cove, but at their first appearance the natives ran to the shore armed with muskets and blunderbusses and kept up such a brisk fire upon them that the ships, after discharging a few rounds of grape shot that did no harm, turned about and put out to sea. The white men felt depressed, particularly as Maquinna told them that he would not permit any ships to anchor there for fear of their desertion. They accepted the situation with outward good grace, however, Jewitt himself laughing over the matter and telling the king that he had never been so happy in his life. John's naturally high spirits carried him through many difficulties which sorely tried the temper of the older man and sometimes drove him to desperation.

Thompson was a very strong and powerful man and had at one time been a professional boxer. He was utterly fearless, and when angered let his opponent or opponents feel the full weight of his wrath. It was because of this that several events occurred that almost cost him his life.

THOMPSON IN TROUBLE.

Late one evening in April Thompson was lighting the lamps in the king's house, the ship's lanterns having been substituted for the pine torches in Maquinna's dwelling. The prince and two or three other boys were dancing around the sailmaker, teasing him by pulling his clothes and laughing at him. A lamp was dropped, the oil upset, and immediately a flame sprang up as high as the roof. Throwing his coat over the blaze, Thompson sprang toward Sat-sat-sok-sis and struck him violently in the face, felling him to the ground. At once there was a terrible uproar. The white slave had dared to raise a hand against the sacred person of the king's son, an act punishable by instant death! Maquinna, hastily summoned, came rushing into the house. He was met by his son, weeping and wiping the blood from his face. Thompson, in an attitude of utter defiance, stood in the middle of the room. While the king, foaming at the mouth in his rage, seized a musket and loaded it, the white man stooped, picked up his coat and nonchalantly put it on.

"You die now," said Maquinna, whose hands were shaking so that he could scarcely hold the weapon, for Maquinna loved his young son almost to idolatry. Thompson's only reply was a laugh.

When Jewitt, hearing of the trouble, entered the house Maquinna was in the act of raising the gun to shoot. John flew to him, seized his arm, and implored him to spare "his father's" life. He pointed out that by his prompt action Thompson had saved the king's house from burning down, and implored Maquinna, by his love for Sat-sat-sok-sis, not to deprive him of his father. Always ready to listen to John, the king at length grew calmer and finally consented to forgive Thompson.

But the matter did not end there. An insult had been offered to their prince, and the tribe held a council at which it was resolved that Thompson should be put to death by torture. It was necessary for Maquinna to keep Thompson virtually a prisoner under guard for several weeks for fear of the vengeance of the tribe.

This narrow escape, strange to say, did not have any particular effect on Thompson.

The present-day Indian village at Friendly Cove.

Shortly after his release a young Indian who had just attained the age of eighteen and who, as the son of a chief, had therefore become a notable himself, taunted Thompson with being a white slave. No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the sail-maker swung round on him, and a struggle ensued in which the young Indian came off very much the worse. Again the tribe clamoured for Thompson's death, but Maquinna still protected him, partly because he was John's "father" and partly because he was useful. As for Thompson himself, when John remonstrated with him over these outbursts of temper, he declared he would much rather be killed than obliged to live among these horrible savages.

"I only wish I had a good ship and some guns," he said, "and I would destroy the whole cursed tribe. It's a pretty pass when a man who has fought the French and Spaniards with glory should have to be a slave to such a despicable set of beings."

John Jewitt, unlike his companion, made the best of everything. When his wound had entirely healed he even began to enjoy himself, and he did all sorts of things to win favour in the king's eyes, "pretending to be pleased with all their sports and buffoon tricks, making little ornaments for the wives and children of the chiefs, and fish-hooks and daggers for the chiefs themselves." He also learned their language and tried to persuade Thompson to do the same, but the latter said he "would have nothing to do with their cursed lingo."

There was a bit of a garden behind the beach where an ancient Spanish village had once stood, and where onions, peas, and turnips had propagated themselves. For the first two months the white men had an abundance of food; salmon was plentiful, and wild strawberries and blackberries grew thickly. Much to their disgust, however, they were expected with painful frequency to dine with the king, when they were obliged on pain of offending Maquinna to eat from the common tray into which all of the Indians either dipped their fingers or their clam-shells. The Indians' chief and practically only dish was sea food—fish, fish-spawn, mussels, clams, or blubber. Occasionally berries were mixed up with the fish dishes, and all food was invariably covered with oil. The king had a separate tray from which he would permit his favourite wife to eat, or some guest whom he specially designed to honour.

THE HAUNTED CAVES.

There is one spot on the Nootka coast where the corroding seas have made vast caves. This particular locality was considered outside the pale by all of the Indians, as their old stories told of the wreck of a whole fleet of canoes there at one time, and the wiping out of a tribe. It was claimed that the ghosts of the departed haunted the spot, running in and out of the great cave entrances and wailing and moaning. And woe betide the voyager who dared to venture there, for spirit hands would lay hold of his craft and draw him ashore, and he would never be seen again.

Thompson confided to John a plan to store up food, and then, some time when

the coast was clear, steal a canoe and make their way to the caves, where he thought they might live by fishing until some ship came along. John, however, was not in favour of such a scheme, and saw in it only hardship and exposure and ultimate death at the hands of the savages.

All through the summer Jewitt and Thompson kept a vigilant look-out from the high rocks behind the village for some sign of a sail which might presage their release from captivity, but they were doomed to disappointment. Several times ships appeared in the offing, but instead of standing in for the shore they passed northward and disappeared, and with them went the hopes of the white men, who saw the summer waning, and looking forward with dread to the long, gloomy winter.

Their tasks began to be irksome to them, for they were not allowed to participate in the excitement of the fishing lest they should seize an opportunity of trying to escape. Their work consisted of fetching wood and water, doing their own and the king's washing, and other inglorious labours, besides keeping guns and tools in order. When the men of the tribe were away on their fishing expeditions the women would seldom or never cook any food, and as the berries disappeared, the vegetables dried up, and all the fish was kept in the houses under watch, Jewitt and Thompson would have gone hungry many a time had it not been for the friendliness of a young Indian girl.

THE LITTLE PRINCESS.

This girl was Yuqua, a Wickininish princess and a younger sister of Maquinna's wife, who was at Friendly Cove on a visit. She was a slender, shy, graceful little thing, much fairer than most of the Indian women, and she became greatly interested in John. It was some time before she would make friends with him, preferring to stand at a distance and peep at him from behind a clump of trees or the corner of a lodge; and she would fly at his approach or the sound of his voice. At length, however, John was able to overcome this reticence, and he used the friendship which ensued to a good purpose. The little princess would secretly procure and give to him "a piece of salmon or other fish, which, by boiling in salt water with some dried onions and turnips—the remains of the Spanish garden—or young nettles and other herbs, furnished a delicious repast."

While the young white man felt only a good-natured liking for the Wickininish maiden, Yuqua quite frankly adored the handsome English youth. She begged that he would make his escape with her while the men were away, promising that her father would treat him like a son and would, if John wished, put him aboard the first ship that came to the village and let him go back to his own people. But John, grateful as he was to the kindly little savage, was not to be caught by any such wiles, especially as he had Thompson to advise him. So, much disappointed, when the fishermen returned from their hunting the little princess went back to her village alone.

But although John had disdained the advances of the Indian girl, he was at a later date to have marriage thrust upon him in spite of his own and Thompson's arguments against it.

Slowly but surely the summer waned, and on the third of September the whole tribe left Nootka to pass the autumn and winter at Tashees, taking every movable thing with them, including the planks of the houses with which to set up their new dwellings. These were all piled on the war canoes.

The Tashish Narrows, named after the old village, is one of the loveliest little winding waterways imaginable, taking its way between ranges of lofty hills covered with magnificent fir trees, interspersed with charming valleys watered by the streams that cascade down the sides of the hills from the overflowing lakes and springs above. It was at one of these pleasant places that Maquinna made camp, and almost at once the Indians set out their weirs to catch the salmon. This fish, as well as halibut and cod, they dried or smoked, but the spawn they threw into tubs and allowed to stand until it fermented, esteeming it thus a great delicacy. Thompson and Jewitt would have fared rather badly for food had it not been that they were permitted to shoot wild ducks and teal and an occasional bear.

Gradually, as Jewitt and Thompson became familiar with the native language, there grew up a greater friendship between them and the king. Thompson, who was quite a good tailor, made little things for Maquinna's household, and finally overjoyed the king by the presentation of what the natives regarded as a triumph of sartorial skill. "This was a *kutsak* or mantle, a fathom square, made entirely of European vest-cloths of the gayest colours. These were sewn together and bound with a deep trimming of the finest otter skin, with which the armholes were also bordered; while the bottom was further embellished with five or six rows of gilt buttons placed as near as possible to each other. Nothing could exceed the pride of Maquinna when he first put on this royal robe, exclaiming in delight: 'Very fine garment!'"

Under the stimulus of his increasing friendship for the white men Maquinna was moved to tell them many stories as they sat around the fire of a winter evening, while the rain pounding on the roof and the swish of the waves on the shore made a rhythmic accompaniment. He explained his reasons for the murder of the crew of the *Boston* by referring to injuries done to him by white

men. One occasion which he mentioned was during a summer several years before when Maquinna had gone away to get a new wife. A schooner came into Friendly Cove and the captain rowed ashore, where he was made welcome and shown every hospitality. False to the trust reposed in him, he broke into the chiefs' houses and rifled all the chests, carrying away the most valuable of the furs. During this same season a Spanish vessel arrived while Maquinna was

though there was a little boy among them, whom Yuqua, the princess, tried to save, they had made him a slave and set him such cruelly heavy tasks that he died.

"And so," added the wily king, fixing his black eyes on John, "it is well that my John did not listen to the Wickininish maiden." Which was the first intimation that either Thompson or John had received that Maquinna knew anything about John's little love affair.

The Nootka Packing Company's factory, which occupies the site of the Indian village of John Jewitt's time.

still absent, and four of the chiefs were barbarously killed by the captain for refusing to accept the Spaniard's price for some skins. Soon after this a ship called the *Sea Otter* arrived and, because of a small theft by one of the Indians, fired upon the canoes which had come alongside, killing over twenty of Maquinna's best men. He himself had narrowly escaped by jumping overboard and swimming for a long time under water. Maquinna had been nursing revenge ever since, and his emotions had swelled to the bursting point at the time the unfortunate *Boston* arrived.

The king further told the white men, by way of warning, of the fate which overtook certain men of the *Manchester*, of Philadelphia, who had deserted their ship and come to him to hide them. (This was a most unlikely tale; he had probably abducted them.) Later they ran away from him with the intention of joining the Wickininish, but were stopped and sent back by another tribe. He had had them put to death by holding them on the ground and forcing stones down their throats, and

Christmas came and went, and at the end of December a religious festival was held at the village, during the celebration of which the white men were banished for seven days—sent out into the wilds with a basket of provisions, and forbidden to return under penalty of instant death. They saw only the beginning of this festival, when two of the savages, dressed in wolfskins and masks and crawling on all fours, came into the king's house and carried away Sat-sat-sok-sis, who shrieked and screamed in terror.

ON THE WAR-PATH.

It was in the latter part of their second July at Nootka, after the tribe had returned again to Friendly Cove, that Maquinna decided to go to war against the A-y-charts, who lived about fifty miles to the south. To the great delight of Jewitt and Thompson they were invited to take part in the expedition. John Jewitt writes: "It consisted of forty canoes, carrying from ten to twenty men each. Thompson and myself armed ourselves with cutlasses and pistols, but the natives took with them only their daggers

and *cheetoolths*, with a few bows and arrows, the latter being about a yard in length and pointed with copper, mussel-shell, or bone; the bows are four feet and a half long with strings made of whale sinew.

"To reach A-y-chart we ascended a river about the size of that of Tashees, the banks of which are high and covered with wood. At midnight we came in sight of the village, which was situated on the west bank near the shore on a steep hill, difficult of access and well calculated for defence. It consisted of fifteen or sixteen houses, smaller than those of Nootka and built in the same style, but compactly placed. By Maquinna's direction the attack was deferred until the first appearance of dawn, as he said that was the time when men slept the soundest.

"All being ready for the attack, we landed with the greatest silence and, going round so as to come upon the foe in the rear, clambered up the hill. While the natives crept into the village my comrade and myself stationed ourselves without to intercept those who should attempt to escape or come to the aid of our friends. We would not consent to attack a sleeping enemy. Having entered the houses, on the war-whoop signal from Maquinna, all proceeded to the work of death. Maquinna himself, who was always a foremost figure in affairs of this sort, seized the head of the chief and gave him a fatal blow.

"The A-y-charts, being thus surprised, were unable to make resistance and, with the exception of a very few, were all killed or taken prisoners on condition of becoming slaves to their captors. I also had the good fortune to take four prisoners whom Maquinna, as a favour, permitted me to consider as mine and occasionally employ in fishing for me. As for Thompson, who thirsted for revenge upon all and sundry, he had no desire to make captives. He was enjoying himself savagely. With his cutlass, the only weapon he would condescend to use against them, he succeeded in killing seven stalwart Indians who came in a body to attack him, an act which obtained him great credit with Maquinna and his chiefs—not that Thompson cared in the least about that part of it.

"After the warriors had put to death all the old and infirm of either sex, as is the barbarous practice with these people, and destroyed the buildings, we re-embarked with our booty in our canoes for Nootka, where we were received with great demonstrations of joy by the women and children. The next day a great feast was held by Maquinna in celebration of the victory."

Ever since Yuqua had gone back home to her people, Maquinna had been receiving offers from her father, the king of the Wickininish, to purchase John. All sorts of presents were offered the Nootka king for his handsome white slave—ornamented war canoes, sea-otter skins, wives and slaves. But Maquinna would not part with John, and John had no desire to leave Thompson, which he must do if he went to another tribe. Besides, the thought of marriage with one of the Indian women—even the pretty, kindly Yuqua—was quite repugnant to him.

"CHOOSE A WIFE OR DIE!"

However, Maquinna had made up his mind that in order to be certain of John remaining among them it was necessary that the young man should marry. Therefore, shortly after leaving Nootka for Tashees, their winter home, the king told John of his decision. Jewitt flatly refused to comply with the request, and he and Thompson both offered all sorts of arguments against it. Maquinna listened to them patiently, but remained obdurate. John must marry, he said, and become one of the tribe. He might have his choice among all the girls in the village, but marry he must, and at once. For this purpose the marriageable girls were paraded before John who, with sad lack of gallantry, spurned every one of them. This angered Maquinna, and he finally told John that he must either choose a wife or else he and Thompson would be put to death. As he did not care for the Nootka women, however, Maquinna added, John might select one from another tribe with the exception of the Wickininish, for Maquinna knew that had John married Yuqua he would never remain with the Nootka Indians, but would go to his wife's people.

John and Thompson talked the matter over very earnestly, and finally came to the conclusion that as marriage was probably the lesser of two evils the young man had better consent to do as Maquinna wished.

Early one morning, therefore, Maquinna and John, with about fifty men in two canoes, loaded with sea-otter skins, cloth, muskets, and other articles of barter, set off for A-i-ty-yart to purchase a bride. Their arrival at the village caused a tremendous excitement, the natives believing that the Nootkas had come to attack. When they learned their peaceable mission, however, the visitors were made welcome, taken to the chief's house, and feasted upon herring spawn and oil. While this was going on the women of the tribe made their appearance, and John eyed them all with utter disfavour. Under the command of Maquinna, however, he was obliged to make a choice and presently picked out a young girl of about seventeen, who was the least unattractive among them, and whom John himself describes as follows: "Her person was small but well formed, as well as her features; her complexion was fairer than any of the women, with considerable colour in her cheeks; her hair long, black, much softer than is usual with them, and her teeth

small, even, and of a dazzling whiteness, while the expression of her countenance indicated sweetness of temper and modesty. She would indeed have been considered as very pretty in any country, and, excepting Maquinna's queen, was by far the handsomest of any of their women."

Present-day Nootka Indians.

As soon as John had indicated his choice Maquinna took his hand and led him into the middle of the room. Presents were brought in, and Maquinna made a speech eulogizing John, to which the A-i-ty-yart chief replied in praise of his daughter, as the girl proved to be. The bridegroom's gifts were all returned to him, and two slaves given him in addition. Feasting followed until well into the night. In the morning the chief handed his daughter to John, earnestly enjoining him to treat her kindly. She was very shy, but seemed glad to go with her bridegroom.

They arrived at Tashees to find the village ready to welcome them. The women took the bride in charge and conducted her to an apartment where, in accordance with custom, she must remain in seclusion for ten days before her marriage. There were feasting and dancing and general hilarity, during all of which young Jewitt remained—unlike his usual self—grave and taciturn, more like a middle-aged man under a burden of care than a young man of twenty about to be wed. Maquinna apportioned him the whole upper part of his house, and allowed him to make a partition around it and to construct some furniture. Thompson aided him. He and young Sat-sat-sok-sis, it was arranged, were to be part of John's family and live with him in his apartment.

AN UNHAPPY MARRIAGE.

Even though the little princess was amiable and intelligent, her companionship proved irksome and distasteful to John, who had all he could do to hide his real feelings from her. Maquinna noticed this and upbraided John, but the young man did not try to excuse himself. He looked upon his marriage as a chain which was to further bind him to these people, and as time went on, instead of diminishing his desire to get away, it strengthened it, until he prayed night and day for some means of escape. Maquinna, declaring that John and Thompson must now consider themselves members of the tribe, ordered them to discard their European clothes and adopt *kutsaks* like the Indians. This was a further discomfort and indignity and Thompson bluntly refused, urging his rheumatism as an excuse. This was accepted in his case, but poor John was obliged to wear the scanty raiment and promptly began to suffer from the cold. At last he became really ill.

His wife took faithful care of him and did her best to help and please him, but though John tried to be grateful, the poor girl remained repugnant to him, and as he tossed about on his bed in delirium he cried and begged that she should be taken from him. In an interval of consciousness Maquinna visited him. He was very much worried over John, feeling a real fondness for him and fearing to lose such a valuable acquisition to his tribe. He asked Jewitt if he thought it would help him if he sent his wife away, and John admitted that it would undoubtedly prove a factor in bringing about his recovery.

Thereupon the poor little bride was returned to her people, and John's brief but troubled married life was at an end, much to his own and Thompson's relief.

It was now the third year of their stay with the Indians, and the men's hopes of release were growing fainter, for though they had heard of no fewer than seven vessels on the coast, yet none appeared inclined to

venture near Nootka, the destruction of the *Boston* having inspired the commanders of other ships with fear lest they should share the same fate. John and Thompson had written many letters and dispatched them by secret messengers to other parts of the coast, where it was considered safe for ships to land, but they felt no certainty that any of these missives had reached their destination.

On the nineteenth of July, while John and Thompson were forging some daggers in the king's house, they were suddenly startled by loud cries of :—

"Strangers! White men!" And some Indians, running into the house, shouted that a vessel under full sail was coming into the harbour.

The two white men exchanged a look of incredulous joy and then went on with their work, under a mask of utter indifference, though their hearts were pounding and their hands shook. Maquinna, standing near, watched them narrowly.

"How, John," he said, in surprise. "You no glad to go aboard?"

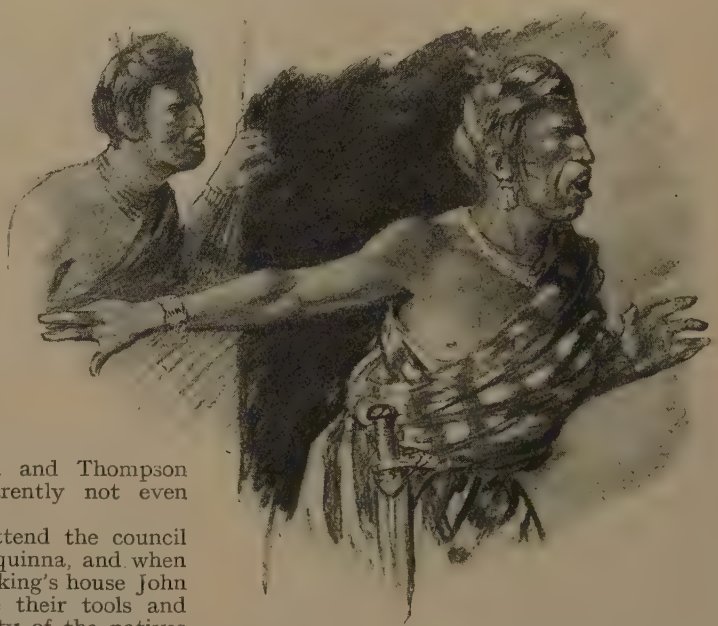
Jewitt shook his head and Thompson continued working, apparently not even listening.

However, they must attend the council about to be held, said Maquinna, and when the men assembled at the king's house John and Thompson laid aside their tools and joined them. The majority of the natives were in favour of putting the two men to death at once, or else sending them back into the woods where there would be no possibility of the newcomers communicating with them. But Maquinna would not listen to either proposal. He meant to go aboard the vessel himself, he said, and he wanted John to write him a letter to present to the captain stating that he had used the two men well, and that so content were they with their lot that they had no desire to return to their own people.

THE FATEFUL LETTER.

John agreed to do this, and must be forgiven if, instead of following Maquinna's instructions, he wrote the following letter, pretending, of course, that it contained only what Maquinna had dictated :—

> SIR,—The bearer of this letter is the Indian king, by the name of Maquinna. He was the instigator of the capture of the ship *Boston*, of Boston in North America, John Salter, captain, and of the murder of twenty-five men of her crew, the two only survivors being now on shore. Wherefore I hope you will take care to confine him according to his merits, putting in your deadlights and keeping so good a watch over him that he cannot escape from you. By doing so we shall be able to obtain our release in the course of a few hours.
>
> (Signed)
>
> JOHN JEWITT, armourer of the *Boston*, for himself and John Thompson, sail maker of said ship.



The king, realizing that he was placing himself and his tribe in John's hands, put the young man through a severe cross-questioning regarding the letter, but John stuck to his pardonable deceit with unmoved countenance, and finally a canoe set off toward the brig *Lydia*, which lay some distance from the shore.

As soon as Maquinna went aboard he presented a pile of sea-otter skins to the captain and then handed him John's letter. What was the king's surprise, a few minutes later, to find himself a prisoner in the captain's room, in irons and under a strongly-armed guard.

When the canoe which had brought Maquinna to the ship put back to shore and the news of their king's imprisonment reached the natives, who were all gathered together on the beach, there was a terrible uproar. It was realized that John had proved false, and many of the common people immediately clamoured for his death by torture. The chiefs, however, knew that this would further jeopardize their

position and that of their king, and they were in a dilemma as to what course they had better follow. Meantime little Sat-sat-sok-sis was weeping pitifully, imploring John to let his father come back to him.

At last, acting on Jewitt's advice, Thompson was sent aboard with instructions that John would follow if the captain would release Maquinna.

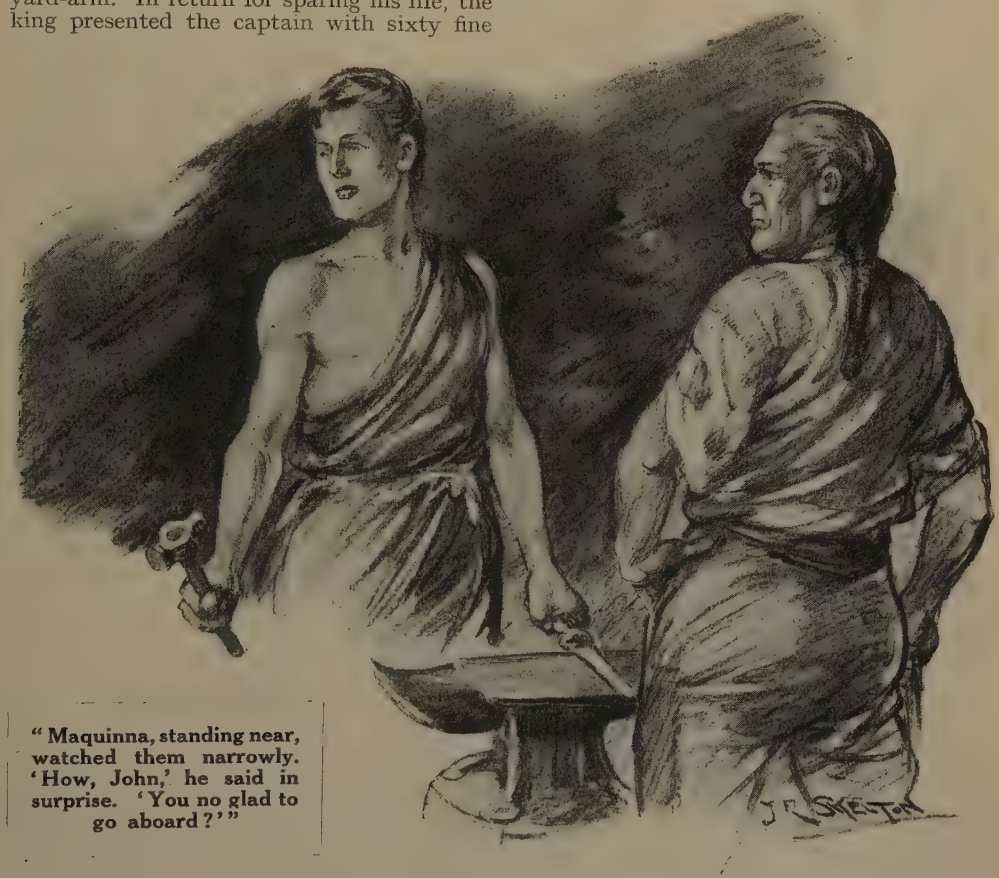
To make a long story short, this exchange was finally effected, although for some time it was difficult to persuade the ship's commander not to hang Maquinna from the yard-arm. In return for sparing his life, the king presented the captain with sixty fine skins and the wonderful mantle which he was wearing. The captain in return gave Maquinna a greatcoat, gay with gilt buttons, and a plumed hat.

When John at length went aboard the *Lydia* he presented an amazing figure. He had grown very tall and his hair, which he had not been permitted to cut, was gathered in a large knot on top of his head and ornamented with a sprig of green spruce. He wore a *kutsak*, painted all over in red and black stripes, while a great bearskin was fastened about his shoulders. His boyish face, though still very handsome, showed traces of the suffering he had undergone, and upon stepping on board and seizing the captain's hands he burst into tears.

Maquinna, to make such amends as he could for the destruction of the *Boston* and the murder of her crew, restored everything which had been taken from the ship. He showed no ill-will toward John, and promised that he would save all his furs for him in the hope that he would come back every year and trade. Poor Sat-sat-sok-sis was broken-hearted at having to part with his white friend, and was only comforted by the promise that he would return before many moons.

The year 1807 saw John again united to his overjoyed parents, who had given him up for dead after hearing of the massacre on board the ill-fated *Boston*.

The West Coast to-day is very much as it was a hundred years ago, with only a handful of people scattered here and there and virgin forest growing down to the rocks. The Indians are still there, with their totems and war-canoes, but they are now peaceable and harmless enough—very different from the fierce savages among whom John Jewitt spent his long years of slavery.



"Maquinna, standing near, watched them narrowly. 'How, John,' he said in surprise. 'You no glad to go aboard?'"

Mongol ladies. Some of them, being "camera-shy," hid their faces.

THE CHILDREN OF THE WILDERNESS

A journey in little known Mongolia

by

JULIET BREDON

The Authoress needs no introduction to THE WIDE WORLD readers. In these articles she describes her visit to the picturesque nomads of Mongolia—a race of steppe-dwellers with their own peculiar manners and customs—and gives a fascinating account of the Devil Dance and the strange "Festival of the Burning of Sins."

I.

SOME time ago a friend, who is by way of being an amateur explorer, came to our house in Peking and said: "Would you care to step back with me into the thirteenth century—into the land of Genghis Khan?" It was a tempting invitation, especially as Mongolia was going through a political crisis at the time owing to the cancellation of her autonomy by China. Perhaps the old Mongol prophecy that one day the spirit of the "Great Captain" would return and once more lead his people to victory was about to be fulfilled. The romance of those barbaric Tartars, living lives of untrammelled freedom in the wilderness, appealed strongly to our imaginations, and we gladly fell in with a plan which was to lead us far afield. The journey we contemplated had a triple objective—to see the Devil Dance at Dolonor, to explore the ruins of Shang-tu, the "Xanadu" of Coleridge, nearby, and

then to push on to Urga for the "Festival of the Burning of Sins."

Accordingly, one blue-and-gold morning in June, our party assembled under the grey walls of Peking to board the train for Kalgan. Our Chinese servant, who could speak Mongol and was to act as interpreter, soon piled our miscellaneous equipment into an open freight car: saddles, bridles, sleeping bags, a primitive stove made from a kerosene oil tin, two saucepans, and a few staple stores—the necessities of life reduced to their simplest expression.

A sharp whistle for "all aboard," and we started moving slowly across the great Chihli plain towards the famous Nankow Pass. At the foot of the defile a second engine was added to the train. The narrow valley is so steep, however, that even with this extra aid we ascended the heavy grade very slowly—no matter for regret, as the road itself is a remarkable engineering feat well worth studying, and the scenery so wild and picturesque that it would be a pity to rush through it. By standing on the rear platform of the guard's van we had an excellent view of everything, including the towers and battlements of the Great Wall, where this ancient relic of the bygone struggles between Tartars and Chinese squirms snake-like over the crests of the hills.

The railway tunnels under the Wall in one place and then runs down on to a plain again, passing several fortified Chinese towns with crenellated ramparts.

In the quaint old city of Kalgan we spent two days making arrangements for the hiring of transport to carry us across the steppes. A Mongol contractor agreed to provide a camel cart for the luggage and riding ponies for ourselves, on condition that we furnished our own saddlery and whips. The former we had brought with us: the latter we were advised to buy locally, of Mongol make—heavy, club-like pieces of wood about two feet long with a cowhide lash attached to the tapering end and a loop at the other, through which the hand is thrust. Such a whip is not only intended to keep the pony up to his work, but is very useful to beat off the savage dogs.

While waiting for our caravan, we explored

The Great Wall of China in the Nankow Pass. This wonderful structure zigzags its way across mountains and valleys for hundreds of miles.

Kalgan and found it a fascinating mediæval town crowded with Chinese and Mongols. The streets are so narrow that two carts can scarcely pass, and are paved with huge blocks of stone worn into deep ruts. There can be no better testimony to the excellence of the work of the Chinese wheelwright than the continuous stream of vehicles which carry passengers and heavy loads day after day over these terrible streets and yet seldom split a hub or lose a spoke.

SILENT BARGAINING.

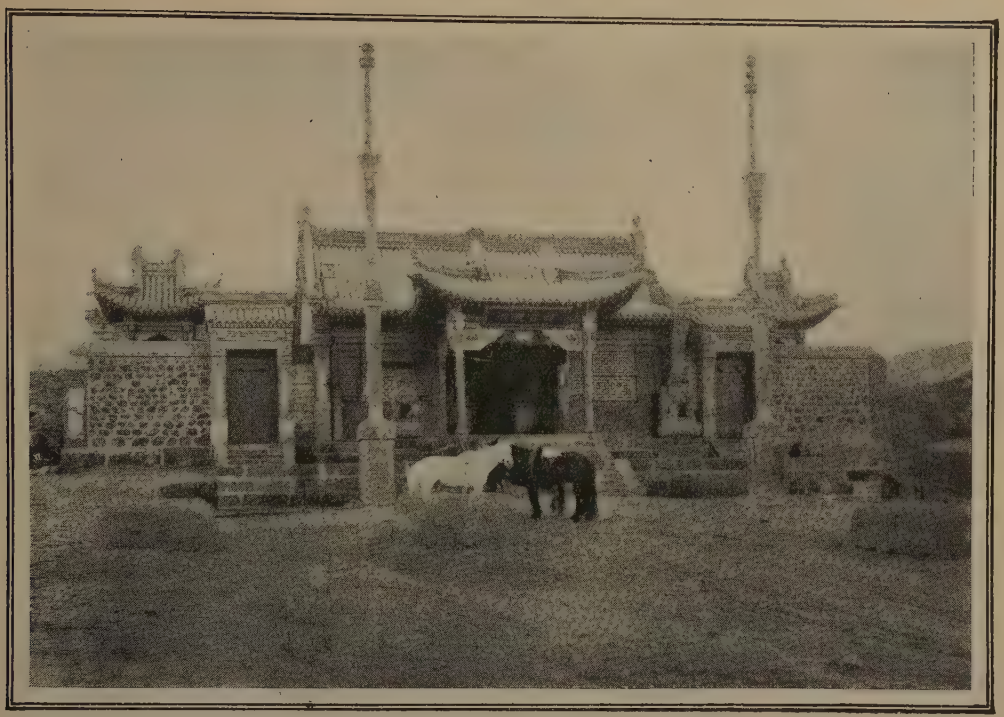
We were delighted with the picturesque market, where the Mongols do their shopping and are cheated rather pathetically by the far-more-astute Chinese. Bargaining is done in a curious way. An intending purchaser clasps the right hand of a dealer and conveys to him what price he is willing to pay by a pressure of the fingers, the number of times this pressure is repeated showing the amount of the offer. There may be a crowd of curious bystanders, but the dealer and the prospective purchaser alone know what bids are made, as the long sleeves of their coats hide their clasped hands. After the bargains are concluded it is amusing to watch the people of the steppes, in the open inn-yards, packing their purchases—saddlery, crockery, iron-ware, and numerous odds and ends—into their bullock carts for the long return journey, or stuffing them away in leather bags. The latter they throw across their saddles, perching themselves on top, but the rider is often the least part of the load a pony has to carry.

At the appointed time our Mongol returned with the promised camel-cart and a driver who declared himself able to act as guide. The solid wooden wheels were guaranteed to withstand the passes; the cart was large enough, when emptied and padded with cushions, to be used as a bed if required, and the camel was supposed to have all the virtues. When the riding ponies were brought round for inspection, however, we got a shock, for they looked an unkempt, undersized lot, none of them over thirteen hands high, none with a single "point" which we expect in a horse. But we soon found that they atoned for all deficiencies in appearance by their qualities. They would carry us all day at a peculiar amble without flagging; they required little food, and that little they foraged for themselves on the steppe; they expected, and received, neither shelter nor grooming; they cheerfully withstood extremes of weather. Travelling with such animals, unrivalled for rough work in severe climates, proved a real pleasure and, moreover, a comparatively inexpensive one, since they cost nothing to feed and at the end of the journey could be easily sold.

The gate that separates Mongolia from China.

We left Kalgan by the famous gate in the Great Wall that separates Mongolia from China. Its heavy wooden doors are still shut every evening at sunset, and woe betide the traveller from the plains who does not arrive before closing time. Neither entreaties nor bribes will induce the guardians to open them again.

Of the several passes which lead to the high plateau beyond, we chose the Han-no-par, for the sake of the magnificent scenery, though it is admittedly the hardest and roughest pass into North China. Considering that this is a main



The temple at the top of the Han-no-par Pass.

highway between two countries, it is a miracle of bad roads. Nature, by some stupendous convulsion, burst a passage through the mountains, and man has done nothing to improve her handiwork. Loose stones are always slipping underfoot, and huge boulders obstruct a path already difficult enough, while the neighbouring hills constantly threaten to roll down more masses and crush the patient traveller. We were four hours doing the four miles to the top, by which time the animals needed a good rest, and got it at a picturesque and convenient little temple where we enjoyed a cup of refreshing tea.

When we pushed on again we deliberately turned our faces northwards, avoiding the main road from Kalgan to Dolonor (Lama Miao), and choosing instead what is known as the "Mongol Road"—a little-used track. For one day only we travelled through comparatively settled country, where the thrifty Chinese agriculturist is encroaching on the grazing grounds of the Children of the Wilderness. For one night only we made use of a Chinese inn. This happened to be a "pig inn," the only place where we could get lodging, as the village was crowded owing to a market fair.

"CAMEL" INNS AND "PIG" INNS.

Let me explain that in the country beyond the Great Wall there are inns of four distinct grades. First comes the ordinary inn, where mules and donkeys, horses and their owners can be accommodated more or less comfortably. Next there is a smaller type of hostelry, where foot passengers stay. The countryman tramping to some distant place to find work and the humble pedlar with his pack, lodge here. Then comes the "camel inn," where only the "ships of the desert" are received, because these ill-tempered brutes are so vicious, biting and kicking all who approach, that they have to be kept apart from other animals: in the more settled localities custom requires their drivers to travel with them only at nights, and to keep them shut up in their own inns by day. Finally, there are the "pig inns," where it was our ill luck to stay. Their accommodation for human travellers is not much worse than elsewhere, but their courtyards are filled with low troughs where the four-footed guests are fed, and the constant grunting and shuffling of the black Chinese porkers are a great annoyance, making sleep impossible.

Next day, still continuing northwards, we passed several small lakes, looking like uncut turquoises in the emerald setting of the summer grass. We were rather surprised to find them here, having the prevailing notion that Mongolia is a waterless country. But we soon discovered this to be one of several popular delusions about a little-known land. There are districts that

abound in lakes and streams, and all along the travelled routes there are wells, generally at intervals of only a few miles, though in the desert country, of course, water *is* scarce.

Although these lakes, simply teeming with wildfowl, sorely tempted the sportsmen among us, we could not stop for shooting, as we were obliged to push on. Our day's stage was a long one of thirty miles, which should bring us to a Mongol encampment by nightfall. In the understanding with our guide, it was stipulated that he find us lodging and good pasturage at the end of every march, but on this occasion he miscalculated the distance, and not a sign of human habitation was in sight by dark.

WHERE MILES ALTER IN LENGTH.

To judge distances in Mongolia is always difficult. The Mongolians themselves, unlike the Chinese, seem to have no standard of measurement except the time it takes a pony to do a given stage. Thus in spring, when the grass-fed animals are lean and exhausted after the long winter, the distance in miles will be counted as much greater than in autumn, when they are fat and vigorous after a summer's rich feeding. It was some time before we understood this and could check our guide, making due allowance for the fact that a day's march on the Mongolian plateau is expected to be much longer than one within the Great Wall. Meanwhile, we had several experiences of sleeping on the plain with a saddle for a pillow, the saddle bags set up for a screen against the wind, the saddle felt for a mattress, and all our available clothing piled on top of us—for it is cold on the high plateau at night even in summer.

We finally reached the Mongol encampment half a day behind our schedule, owing to our driver having taken a "short cut" which, as usually happens, turned out to be longer in the end. Here we found numerous tents, and were most hospitably received by the local chieftain, who put his largest guest *yurt* at our disposal. This proved unusually comfortable, commodious, and clean—a great contrast to the average Mongol tent, which is filthy. The round raised floor of beaten earth and the dais which serves as a sleeping place were covered with fine carpets. The walls consisted of two layers of felt spread over a framework of laths tapering to a point, much like the skeleton of an umbrella turned upside down, and held in place by horsehair ropes. A few rough lacquered cupboards and some bronze Buddhas constituted the furniture. Unfortunately the general effect of elegance and luxury was somewhat spoiled by the roof and walls being blackened with smoke from the open iron grate in the centre of the tent, where a cheery fire of *argol*, or dried cattle-dung, was burning. This fuel is cleaner to handle than coal and much cheaper, easy to light, absolutely odourless, and excellent to cook with when properly prepared. The single disadvantage is that it gets damp easily, and then gives out quantities of smoke when lighted. We were told that the prevalence of eye diseases in Mongolia is largely due to this acrid smoke, which is positively blinding and sets up acute irritation of the eyes.

A picturesque scene in

On our arrival the chief sent us a present of cheese and sour cream. The latter proved very good, but the former was too full of hairs to be attractive. Some women servants were also ordered to prepare tea. Tea in

Mongolia is not a luxury, but a real necessity of life. After the water has been put on to boil in a pail, a handful of dried tea leaves are scraped off a big black brick with a knife and thrown on the surface. A little fat is then melted into a pot previously swept out with a wisp of hair from a horse's tail, the cracklings are carefully removed, enough meal is added to make the compound into a kind of porridge, and well stirred till the mass looks brown and dryish. Then the tea, cleared from the sediment, is poured out, flavoured with salt and boiled up again, after which it is pronounced "ready."

the courtyard of an inn.

This meal-tea, served in the morning and at noon, is the only food the Mongols eat until sunset. The one big meal comes at the end of the day, and there is no wonder everybody is exceedingly eager for it.

In honour of our arrival the local chieftain had prepared a feast where, as the principal guests, we were directed to take the best seats, and placed ourselves carefully with our feet towards the door, this being Mongol etiquette. According to custom we were immediately offered snuff by our host, from a handsome agate bottle. It is safe to gauge the wealth and position of any man in Mongolia from his snuff bottle. Men, and women too, carry one, and must offer it at once when meeting strangers, even if it happens to be empty. The recipient, too polite to notice this, sniffs it with dignity and returns it.

The feast consisted principally of stewed millet and boiled fat mutton, served on flat brass dishes. The rump and tail were reserved for us as a great compliment. Armed only with a knife, the Mongols, who are gluttonous eaters when they get a chance, soon made havoc of the steaming mass of meat. No forks or spoons were used; the natives picked out the pieces that pleased them with their fingers and cut them off dangerously near their faces with their knives. We had considerable difficulty in eating in this manner, and were told afterwards that the natives quite understood this—"because our noses were so long."

The Mongols washed the food down with copious draughts of *airak*. *Airak* is a kind of native whisky distilled from mare's milk, which is thicker than cow's milk, and has a kind of sour taste even when quite fresh. It is allowed to stand for several days, then poured into big earthenware jars and frequently stirred until it reaches the consistency of buttermilk. It is next put into a huge pot, and covered with what looks like a barrel with both ends knocked out. The vessel is suspended in the middle of the barrel, a kettle full of cold water is set on the top, and after a few minutes' boiling in this primitive still, the milk is changed into pure spirit.

Our host, the Mongol chieftain, and his family.

Our host was very proud of his droves of horses—symbols of bounteous hospitality—and liked to show off his wealth by kee ing his mares, with their foals, tied to a long rope pinned to the ground in front of his line of tents.

A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT.

As the *airak* loosened their tongues, the Mongols, through our interpreter, began to ask many questions about our journey and foreign countries. Unlike the Chinese, they are very curious concerning the rest of the world—a legacy, perhaps, from the days when Genghis Khan and his followers, their ancestors, spread over it. They were also quite willing to tell us stories from their rich folklore, and even to talk about themselves. One of our fellow-guests, who had been Master of the Horse of the late Manchu dynasty, recounted a ghastly experience. At one time, he said, he had been imprisoned, on a false charge, in the barbarous Mongol way: that is to say, nailed up in a wooden packing case and left on the steppe to die. But he was fed through holes in the box by his friends, and somehow kept alive for three months, till their influence got him released. The ordeal so undermined his health that he spat blood for a year afterwards, though he was now completely restored to health and had just taken to himself a young and pretty wife. Not all criminals are so lucky, however, as we found out, when we afterwards came across one of these living tombs on the plain. Wolves and savage dogs had broken into it and left nothing but clean-picked bones.

Finally the conversation turned to the subject of big game. We told the Mongols that we nad seen flocks of antelope grazing on the steppe, but on catching sight of us they disappeared like grey clouds into space. It was pretty to see so many of these graceful beasts all tearing across the rolling prairies. There was no chance of getting a successful shot at them. When we fired, they split up into small herds, usually led by large does, and soon scattered for miles in every direction.

Seeing our disappointment at missing good sport, the chief very kindly suggested that we should stay over an extra day and hunt with him in the Mongol fashion. He also said we must use his ponies, as ours would not be so fresh after their long journey. We accepted most gratefully, and the party broke up early, as it is the Mongol custom to retire shortly after a meal. We were to start at sunrise, because our host thought it would amuse us to ride out first and see the extra horses caught on the steppe.

The Mongol cowboys proved wonderfully adept at their work, and their riding would arouse envy even in an American bronco-buster. Instead of a lariat or lasso, they use a twenty-foot pole little thicker than a fishing rod, at the end of which is a looped thong of rawhide. With this they dexterously catch the wildest pony by slipping the small loop over his head while going at top speed. Once the pony is thrown, by a few clever manœuvres, a man dismounts, seizes hold of its tail, and squats behind it. As the infuriated animal gallops off, the man slides after it, slipping easily over the ground in his felt boots until the beast stops exhausted. There is a further short struggle before the saddle can be put on and a rider seat himself firmly, but the Mongols are such superb horsemasters that in half an hour the horse is considered broken and fit to be ridden.

THE ANTELOPE HUNT.

We started for the hunt in quite an imposing cavalcade, the Mongols looking very picturesque on their high wooden saddles with silver-studded bridles. We stopped a moment to watch one of them

mend a broken saddle girth. Nobody had prepared for any such accident by bringing extra straps, because it is the custom to make repairs *en route* by pulling a handful of hair out of the horse's tail and plaiting it into a band to make up any deficiencies. After this slight delay we started riding in earnest. Our ponies simply flew over the ground, regardless of holes or stones, and taking clumps of sage brush in their stride, till we spotted a herd of antelopes. They caught sight of us almost immediately and were off at top speed. The great difficulty was to approach without alarming them too much. Luckily the nature of the ground enabled us to do this, as the plain was gently undulating so that hollows and hills alternated. The antelopes soon broke up into small parties, some attempting to hide in the hollows and others to confuse us by running in circles. The chief, however, directed his men to take a parallel hollow, and thus they succeeded in coming up to three fine bucks at short range. Two were brought down and a third wounded, while the rest of the herd got away safely, in spite of all our attempts to head them off. This Mongol method of hunting antelope gave us excellent sport, but it certainly requires good horsemanship and accurate shooting, as distances on the plains are very deceptive, objects appearing much nearer than they really are.

In spite of a most hospitable invitation to stay on, and the promise of splendid duck shooting on a neighbouring lagoon, we had no more time to spare, and reluctantly took leave of our kind host to push on towards our destination. Never shall we forget the morning we rode away from the encampment! The steppe, bathed in sunlight, appeared radiantly beautiful, and flocks of larks and other song-birds filled the crystal-clear air with music. The plateau itself was one vast sea of grass covered with buttercups and campanulas, all shining with diamond dewdrops. Sloping gently upwards towards the horizon, it was dotted towards the west with clusters of tents, from around which came the bleating of sheep, the lowing of oxen, and the cries of herdsmen driving their flocks to water. To the east, a party of *argol* gatherers were starting forth to their work attended by their ox cart, and straight before us stood a large drove of horses. On such a day and on such ground our little ponies, rested and fresh, could not resist a gallop, in spite of the long journey before them, of which they seemed to have an instinctive knowledge. They lifted their heads, sniffed the breeze, and then spun away like mad things over the steppe on which they were born and reared.

When, after a week on the plain, we neared Dolonor, or Lama Miao as the Chinese call it, groups of riders, men and women, often overtook us, on their way to the festival. These parties usually stopped for polite exchange of greetings and appeared very friendly, even familiar, until we asked permission to photograph them, when the ladies suddenly became "camera shy," and turned their heads aside. This was rather an advantage, for their wonderful head dresses were more interesting than their faces, and we seized the opportunity to admire and to snap the turquoise, coral, and silver ornaments which are the pride of the

The man who was nailed up in a box (in centre) and his young bride.

women of the wilderness. Every married woman, however poor, manages to decorate her head in some picturesque fashion, the style depending on the tribe to which she belongs. Sometimes the result looks rather ridiculous, as, for example, when a small round hat with ear flaps is tied on top of the ornaments, obviously quite clear of hair and head.

In Dolonor itself we found plenty of animation. Caravans of pilgrims were flocking in from every direction. It was easy to see what a powerful hold their degenerate religion has on the Mongols. They left all the business opportunities in the hands of the Chinese, who crowded the town to sell and barter, careless of performing any acts of worship, while they themselves spent all their time in prostrations before the sacred images, lighting incense sticks bought from the priests at exorbitant prices, and in turning prayer wheels (containing thousands of little slips of paper on which prayers are written) in the firm belief that one turn of the wheel is equivalent to reciting all the prayers contained in them.

Mongol

A living tomb on the steppe.

THE DEVIL DANCE.

On the day of the Devil Dance we proceeded early to the big temple. The outside is sufficiently imposing, with a tip-tilted roof and gaily painted eaves. Within the main sanctuary, which would be dark were it not for the thousands of butter lamps placed in rows before every shrine, we found the three great images of the Buddhist trinity, the Buddhas of the Past, Present, and Future. The images are larger than life size, and freshly gilded from foot to crown. As in the cloisters of a European cathedral, there are little side chapels which hold sacred relics and shrines. We could judge of the wealth of the monastery and the piety of the faithful by the bronze bowls, the embossed or gilded salvers for offerings, and the splendid tapestry and embroidered hangings.

When the worshippers begin to gather the scene is very impressive. Hundreds of brightly dressed Mongols were coming and going across the courtyards that divided the buildings. Presently there was a procession of Lamas in gorgeous yellow and red silks, wearing a headgear that reminded one of the

chorus of a comic opera. The general effect as they disappeared into the shadows of the great hall was of bright tropical birds in the shade of some mysterious jungle.

The first part of the service was the adoration of a miraculous image from whose brow, it is believed, a hair a thousand miles long can be drawn out, and from whose body light is said to radiate on certain nights. A thunderous harmony like an organ peal broke the interval for meditation, and slowly died away again. Then the Abbot, pointing with a bundle of peacock's feathers, gave the signal to continue the litany, which was repeated by two choirs of monks with extraordinarily deep bass voices. This chant was interrupted occasionally by the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets, and was then taken up again and again with endless repetitions till one wondered if the celebrants are mentally petrified by the endless ritual and routine.

Meanwhile other Lamas were busy with preparations for the dance, which was to take place in the courtyard outside. In a corner boys and men were putting on their masks and ceremonial garments, in full view of the waiting public.

We took up our stand in a side veranda and prepared to take snapshots of the proceedings. Soon huge bronze trumpets six feet long began to blare out their mournful notes, accompanied by the roll of drums. Next a company of priests appeared and beat back the crowd with whips, lashing out among the people, who accepted the blows quite unconcernedly, considering it good luck to be struck. By the time a space was cleared, the dancers emerged from the temples. The antics of these individuals, dressed and masked like fearsome beasts and demons, were very curious. Two by two they pranced around in circles, giving stately leaps from one foot to another. This continued for an hour till finally the dance—if one may so describe the series of posturings—closed when a dough figure of a miniature man was produced and solemnly cut to pieces. Some Mongols believe that this is intended to signify the killing of the Spirit of Evil, others that it is the slaying of an enemy who opposed Buddhism in ancient times.

horse-breakers.

The temple at Dolonor where the Devil Dance was held.

One of the characters in the Devil Dance.

As soon as this last ceremony was over, the crowd of Lamas and spectators dispersed to enjoy the wrestling. The Children of the Wilderness are good sportsmen, and their hard, open-air life keeps them in such excellent condition that their wrestlers, though they have rules very different from ours, give a most interesting and spirited performance, greatly enhanced by their curious costume, which is not unlike that of the Roman legionaries.

In order to rest our horses and see the town, we spent two days in Dolonor, lodged in a wretched inn where the last tenants of the rooms we occupied had been horses. The only redeeming feature about the place was a little servant maid with a sweet face and pretty manners, who went about her work in a new hat with streamers gay with silver ornaments.

Extraordinary Lama headgear at Dolonor.

Dolonor itself proved very disappointing. The town is simply a large Chinese colony in the midst of a sandy desert, with little interest about it and no monuments save several big temples served by hundreds of Lama priests. It is famous as a market for horses and oxen. The only thing worth seeing, apart from the Devil Dance, was the crowded horse and cattle fair. The Mongols who bring down the herds bivouac in the open, making picturesque gipsy-like groups. The women accompany their husbands and take an active part in selling the stock. When sales are brisk one witnesses the wildest scenes in the market-place as reckless riders tear up and down regardless of life and limb, to show off their mounts to the best advantage, and the air is filled with choking dust stirred up by hundreds of hoofs.

At the end of the day the Mongol ladies visit the small retail shops in the town and do their shopping. It is amusing to see them on these excursions, the poorer ones with half a brick of tea in hand, the well-to-do hugging several bricks in their arms, because tea happens to be the common currency of a country where minted money and even lump silver are rare and, out on the plains, practically unknown.

(To be concluded.)

WINNING A WIFE

by

Capt. E. A. Evans

ILLUSTRATED BY
T. H. ROBINSON

"The facts of this story," writes the Author, "are set down as narrated to me, and are to the best of my belief entirely correct. The incident as to the Englishman living in Tirah I personally investigated with the Political Agent, who confirmed what I had been told."

"PEACE be upon you."

"And upon you, peace," I replied, giving the customary salutation, as I looked up at the approaching figure. I was sitting outside my tent cleaning my rifle and toasting my toes at a wood fire, for the winter evening was more than a little chilly. I had to be up early next morning, and had intended turning in betimes, so I did not feel as cordial as I might have done towards the visitor. Nothing abashed, however, the native came forward and squatted down beside me. Tall and erect still, in spite of his years, with the "bobbed" hair of the Khattak, turning grey, he must have been a fine-looking man in his day.

"The *sahib* has had good shooting?" he inquired courteously.

"No," I said shortly. "Rotten! I have spent two days in your country, Khattak, and have seen nothing but two does with their young. And I have walked at least a thousand miles."

He smiled.

"Ah," he said, "*shikar* is not what it was when I was young; nowadays rifles are cheap and so plentiful that there is scarcely one of God's creatures left alive. I heard in the village that a *sahib* had honoured us with his presence, and I came to pay my respects. I have eaten the salt of the English for many years."

"A pensioner?" I inquired.

"Yes, protector of the poor; Sher Khan, number twenty-forty-seven, Sixtieth Regiment. It was an Englishman who won my bride for me, too, so I have double cause to be grateful."

"Really?" I said, mildly astonished. I thought he meant that some British officer of his regiment had lent him the money to pay for his wife.

"Would the *sahib* care to hear the story?"

"Very much," I replied, untruthfully. I wanted to go to bed, and I watched with inward anguish while he settled himself down comfortably. And then he told me the following story.

I was young and now I am old. When a man is young his thoughts turn naturally on marriage. When I was on furlough my parents urged me to get married and I agreed, but with certain stipulations. I had set my heart on the daughter of Jan Gul, the richest man in our village, whose daughter was reputed to be most beautiful. My parents approached Jan Gul, but he refused their offer for his daughter's hand. It was not a question of money so much as position; my family was as well born as his, but impoverished through over-much litigation, whereas he had become very prosperous, and expected to marry his daughter to some headman's son or an Indian officer, whereas I was only a *naik* (corporal). For many days all the relations on both sides argued, and finally Jan Gul gave way and declared that I might have the girl when I was promoted *havildar* (sergeant) and could put down a thousand rupees. With that I had to be content, and my furlough being up, I returned to my regiment, then stationed at Jacobabad.

When I got back I found to my great joy that one of the senior *havildars* was being transferred to another regiment, and that the colour-*havildar* of my company had already gone on pension. It was thus my turn for promotion if only I could pass the examination.

This was a matter of great difficulty. Much time I spent over books till my head reeled, and I paid money to *babus* (clerks) and others to help me to understand that

which they contained, but my mind was all confusion, and as the time of examination was drawing near, I was in despair. At length I decided to go to my company commander. I went round one evening and found him in his bungalow, prostrate on a bed, fanning himself and covered from head to foot with prickly heat.

He asked what I wanted. I know the ways of the English and how they do not care for much talk, so I answered boldly: "Cherisher of the poor, it is the matter of this examination. Drill I know, musketry I have learnt, and recon'sence I have also learnt at your honour's hands, but this matter of accounts passes any man's comprehension."

"In other words," put in my *sahib*, "you want me to teach you math'matics. Oh! you people. All day I work with you, till I am ready to die from exhaustion. Is not that enough, without my working half through the night, too?"

I kept silent, and he went on: "All right; come here at seven every evening, and I will do half an hour with you."

And so he did, he sitting in a long chair and I squatting by his side on the veranda, till at length I mastered this invention of the evil one. Also to be quite safe, I gave a small present to the schoolmaster, who would correct the papers.

In time, therefore, I was made *havildar*, and wrote home to my village announcing the fact. To my horror they wrote back in reply telling me that a betrothal was being arranged between the daughter of Jan Gul and the son of a wealthy landowner from a neighbouring village. I wrote hurriedly to Jan Gul, reminding him of his promise, and reproaching him for his conduct. I was now a *havildar*, I pointed out, and had the thousand rupees for which he had stipulated. This was not true, but I thought I could obtain the sum if it came to a pinch. He sent no answer, however, and in desperation I approached my *sahib* once more and asked for leave.

"You've only just returned from furlough," he said, "but I suppose you want to go and show off your stripes. All right; you can have ten days."

I left for my village that same night and found on my arrival that arrangements for the betrothal were well forward. Old Jan Gul would have nothing to do with me; he had made an excellent match for his daughter and was very curt with my parents and myself. The bridegroom and his friends arrived while we were still arguing, and the celebrations, which as your honour knows last three days, were begun.

That night while all the village feasted and sang I sat apart, bitter and angry. All of a sudden, above the sound of song and laughter, arose the sound of rifle shots, and then the wailing of women. I ran up to find out the cause and found everywhere confusion. Apparently, while all the men were outside feasting and letting off fireworks, and the women watching from within, a raiding party from across the border had swooped down and carried off the intended bride in all her finery, with the intention, no doubt, of holding her to ransom.

At once I saw my chance; if I could but recover her by any means, I would take care that she returned to her village as my bride. Already they were organizing a pursuit party, but it did not suit my plans to join this rabble. Instead, with a companion from my regiment, also on leave, and my young brother, who was not at that time in the army, I set out, unknown to the rest and by a different route. By my advice we went unarmed but disguised as *mirasis* (musicians), for as you know, your honour, all Khattaks are devoted to music and can play more or less.

I could make a pretty shrewd guess at the place whence the raiders came, and knowing that our village pursuit party would prevent them taking the direct path, we set out by another, and reached the village I suspected in the early hours of the following morning.

We were halted by an Afridi sentry.

"Peace be upon you," he said, looking anything but peaceful.

"And upon you peace," we replied.

"May you not become tired," he said.

"And may you never become poor," we answered.

"Who are you?" he said then.

"*Mirasis*," we told him.

"Come, then," he said and let us pass, for to be a *mirasi* means admittance anywhere.

We entered the village, paid our respects to the headman, and were given food. The village, though large, was a miserably-constructed affair and evidently poor, not like our Khattak villages.

"Here we dwell in prosperity," said the old man proudly, indicating with a sweep of his arm the collection of one-roomed mud hovels that constituted the place.

Well, they entertained us to the best of their ability, and while we were still feeding, in came, as I had expected, the raiding-party, and I saw the daughter of Jan Gul, heavily veiled, hustled into one of the huts. I was entirely without a plan to get her back, but I had some idea of staying over the night and making a desperate attempt at a rescue when all was quiet. Accordingly we pleaded the distance we had travelled and received a ready permission to remain in the village during that day, playing and singing at intervals in return for their hospitality. While we were so occupied, the opportunity for which I had been waiting occurred unexpectedly, in the shape of a raid from another Afridi village, between

" Taking some white stuff like snowflakes from a bottle, he wrapped it up in a leaf."

which and this village there was a feud. The enemy descended on the village from three sides, and while the inhabitants were still running for their rifles, the raiders had killed two men and were driving off the cattle.

A man sitting next to me had been hit, and I seized his rifle, intending to do what I could to assist. As I ran up I saw a raider making an attack on the old headman, who was unarmed. I am a good shot and was able to bring the rascal down first shot, thereby earning the gratitude of the headman. At the same time my two companions, with some Afridis of the village, ran out to rescue the cattle. These, as the custom is amongst Afridis, had been handed over to the charge of young boys, who drove them off, thus releasing the able-bodied men for fighting. My companions and their friends had beaten off the boys and were heading the cattle back, when they were attacked by yet another party. As they were unarmed they were unable to defend themselves, and would undoubtedly have been killed, being between two fires, if it had not been for an unexpected counter-attack from one flank, which drove their attackers off. The villagers had by now driven away the main attack, and finding the place too hot for them, the raiders melted away as silently as they had come.

The headman came up to me and expressed his thanks for my timely assistance. " If there is anything in this village you covet," he said magnificently, " say the word ; it is yours."

I promptly replied that I should like my bride returned, and his face fell. He was just about to make excuses, when the counter-attackers came up, and to my extreme annoyance, proved to be headed by my rival, Lalla Gul, who not daring to venture into the village, had determined to wait outside until nightfall, and then attempt a rescue. I had not credited him with so much perseverance, and when he, in his turn, asked for his bride back, I felt my hopes sinking again.

" What am I to do ? " exclaimed the old headman, perplexed. " There is one girl and two swains. To one I am indebted for my own life, to the other I owe the life of my son "—the youth had been in the party with my brother—" To both I am indebted, but how am I to do justice ? "

We both pleaded our causes, the whole population of the village being assembled by now to hear us, but the old man swore that he could not see the rights of the case. He said that he would pray awhile in the mosque and give us an answer later in the evening, so we had to wait in what patience we could.

In the evening, after food, we asked for his decision. He stroked his beard for a long

time and at length said: "Young men, I have pondered over this matter, but I am still unable to decide on the merits of the case. I have therefore decided on a contest in which the successful man shall carry off the girl. Moreover, an escort and safe-conduct to the border will be given."

At this there was some murmuring from Lalla Gul's party, which I could understand. Afridis prize marksmanship above most qualities, and it was anticipated that they would set a mark for shooting. At this, being a soldier, I had the obvious advantage.

The headman, however, called for silence.

"In this contest," he went on, "to neither will be advantage. Three miles from the village there is a cave situated on the face of a precipice. This cave is known to all the young men of the village and in it a bear has made its lair with its young ones. Several attempts have been made by our young men to shoot the animal, but unsuccessfully. To-morrow, then, you two shall approach the bear's den, armed only with a stout stick; whoever shall kill or capture the bear carries away the girl. If neither is successful, she remains the property of the village and the young men who carried her off. Do you agree, Khattaks?"

I looked over at Lalla Gul, and he looked at me. I could see he had little relish for the job, for he as the son of a prosperous man had lived softly, and could have the pick of many girls had he wanted. Nevertheless he was unwilling to back out and be the laughing-stock of these Afridis; and as for me, it was my only chance.

"We have your promise, oh, headman?" I asked.

"The word of an Afridi," he said.

I would like to have replied that that was nothing much, but, as we say, "in the presence of the tiger the fox holds his peace," so we both agreed. After that we made music till late in the evening.

Next morning Lalla Gul, who was feeling less brave in the chill winter air, spent his time in massaging his limbs and practising blows with the wooden club, but as for me, I had other plans. Overnight one of the young Afridis had boasted that theirs was the only village to contain a live *Feringhee* (Englishman). I thought he must mean that they had carried off a *sahib* from Peshawar or some station and meant to hold him to ransom; but he said, No, it was a *Feringhee* who had turned Mussulman and settled in the village many years ago. He lived like a hermit under the protection of the headman, and was much venerated as a holy man and one skilled in medicines. For a long time I could not believe that this was really true, but he finally convinced me, and in the morning I made up my mind that I would go and visit this alleged Englishman. I know the English and their powers, and when he spoke of medicine, it seemed to me that perhaps this Englishman might help me to win my bride.

So, leaving Lalla Gul to work some of the fat of idleness from his limbs, I tramped the three miles to the hermit's cave. It was low and dark inside, and I could hear someone chanting verses from the Koran. I entered with diffidence and said, "Peace be upon you."

"And upon you, peace," returned a benevolent voice, and I saw an old man, who might have been Pathan or *Feringhee*, and spoke Pushtu with the accent of the Afridis.

"May you live for ever," I said, but he did not return the greeting. Instead, he said to me, sternly, "Young man, keep me not from my devotions with idle salutations. Say what is your wish, and go in peace."

So I said to the old man, "They say you are a *Feringhee*."

He neither affirmed it nor denied it, and I went on: "I have eaten the salt of the English for many years." Then I told him the whole of my story.

"And what is this to me, young man?" he said. "I am old; what have I to do with tales of girls and marriages? Go, leave me in peace."

"Protector of the poor," I implored, and went on my knees in his wretched hovel, for I perceived that this man, in spite of his rags and dirt, was a true *sahib*. "They say you are a healer. Give me some magic that will slay this bear, and I will call down every blessing on your head."

He groaned. At last he got up and, taking some white stuff like snowflakes from a bottle, he said, wrapping it up in a leaf: "Take this. On the end of your stick put some paste made of flour and water, and put this powder on the paste just before going to the bear's cave, but only just before, otherwise the power will go from it, and do not bring the powder near yourself or you, too, will die. When the bear approaches, push the stick under its nose, and it will die within a minute. But immediately hit it on the head with the stick, lest people marvel and find out that it came about through my agency, in which case I shall have rest neither by day nor by night from men with enemies to wipe out."

I promised and left him, praying Allah to reward him. But he was deep in his prayers again and I doubt if he heard me.

That afternoon the whole village turned out to watch the contest. Considering it advantageous to have second turn, I arranged it, by a small present to the *mullah*, who would prepare the lots, so that when we drew for places, Lalla Gul should go first.

The villagers sat down on the edge of the *nullah*, having put out sentries to prevent surprise. The bear's cave was situated about twice the height of a man from the top of the cliff, which was quite straight and without foothold from top to bottom.

"Finally, giving one terrific heave, it flung the pair of us over the side of the cliff."

From the cave was a sheer drop of sixty feet. Entrance to the cave was by a narrow path which slanted up to the top.

Down this path Lalla Gul, feeling less and less brave, started cautiously. He had a heavy club in his hand and in his girdle a knife. Almost the only possible way of overcoming the bear would be to tempt it out of its cave and, swinging the club, strike it so that it was knocked over the cliff and would be killed by its fall on to the stony river-bed below.*

Taking up his stand in the middle of the path, Lalla Gul threw rocks and stones into the cave to induce the bear to come out. There was much growling before it would do so, but eventually it did, and Lalla Gul had an excellent chance while it was still sleepy and standing in the mouth of its cave. But he seemed petrified with fright at sight of the animal and stood stock still while the angry animal advanced on him. As it got up to him he gave it a despairing blow with his club on the snout. The bear bellowed with pain and rage—and at the sound Lalla Gul's courage seemed to ebb away, and he turned and ran up the path again amid the jeers of the Afridis—none of whom, incidentally, had had the courage to do this themselves.

This was my opportunity! Clambering swiftly down the narrow path, I was on the angry bear before she was aware of it. I sprang forward and rammed the stick under her snout. She lifted up her head and bit into the wood so deeply that I could not withdraw the stick. I thought for a dreadful minute that the *Feringhee* had lied to me and that the magic was no magic at all, but suddenly as the bear, swinging her head from side to side, seemed about to wrest the stick from my grasp, her eyes glazed and she toppled in a heap on the path. I was amazed, but I remembered the *sahib's* advice and, standing between the bear and the people below, I thrust on the stick as hard as I could to make them think that I had killed it by pushing the stick down its throat.

There was much cheering from below, but suddenly the cheering stopped and cries of warning took their place. I looked round to see the cause, and saw, to my horror, a *second* bear emerging from the cave!

I wrenched desperately at the stick to pull it free from the first one's jaw, while the newcomer stood over its dead mate and smelt it with great noisy snuffings. I put my foot on the dead bear's snout and tugged, but so firmly had the brute bitten into the wood, that when it did come away, two teeth and part of its jaw came away with the stick. Then I aimed a swinging blow at the advancing animal, but it raised itself on its hindquarters, and giving one blow of its fore-paw, knocked the stick from my hand, sending it whizzing over the edge of the cliff. Next instant the bear flung itself on me, as I turned to run, and got my calf between its jaws. I pulled out my knife and, in my agony, thrust it to the hilt again and again into the brute's flank. The bear, still gripping my leg, beat the air and the ground with its four paws, and finally, giving one terrific heave, it flung the pair of us over the side of the cliff.

As I crashed over I thought that now indeed all was finished, and that my labour had been in vain, for I should certainly be killed, and Lalla Gul would marry the girl after all.

But Allah is great! By chance, a small insignificant bush grew out at right angles to the cliff, and this arrested my fall when half-way down; I clutched at the branches while the bear, thanks be to God, fell free.

The Afridis now rushed up and with ropes and pugarees, hauled me up and back to the village, where the old *Feringhee* bandaged my lacerated calf. I rested there three nights and during that time, as you may imagine, I took care to claim my bride. On the fourth day, in spite of great pain, I set forth with my companions, the girl, and the promised escort. The headman wanted me to stop on, but for many reasons I was anxious to get away, among them being the fact that I could not get it out of my head that the cunning old man had known quite well about that second bear, and that he had hoped sincerely that we would both be killed in order to keep the girl—and the ransom he would get for her—in the village.

That is all my story, protector of the poor. We returned safely to our own village, where Jan Gul could no longer refuse me the girl in marriage; in fact, he waived the question of the thousand rupees. We were betrothed before I left, and then, my leave being up, I had to return to Jacobabad.

That is many years ago now, and it may seem strange to you to hear an old man talking of love and marriage. But—thanks be to Allah the all-merciful—I have four strapping sons to carry on my name.

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* The bear of Northern India, though very formidable when angered, is litttle bigger than a full-grown Newfoundland dog.—THE AUTHOR.

Mr. F. C. Glass's crew and dug-out.

DOWN THE ARÄGUAYA IN A "DUG-OUT"

Told by Frederick C. Glass
and set down
by
REGINALD POUND

The conclusion of Mr. Glass's most interesting narrative, describing his adventures on a little-known Brazilian river.

II.

AFTER my strange encounter with the Tapirapè Indians, who boarded my canoe and turned its nose upstream, forbidding me to venture farther into their territory, I decided that not only would I act on their advice, but that I would forthwith make my way back up the Araguaya to St. Leopoldina, nearly eight hundred miles away.

So it came about that, early the following morning, I and my companions — O-di-di, my Caraja Indian friend, Sylverio, the deaf and taciturn Brazilian, and his twelve-year-old son Manoel—woke with the rising sun, made a hurried breakfast under the trees by the riverside, and embarked without further delay.

To the lay mind it may seem that the homeward journey must inevitably have been lacking in the interest which characterized the trip upstream. On the contrary, however, I found myself as much engrossed by the sights and incidents of the later trip as I was by those of the outward voyage. The fact that the river is extremely wide in many places made it possible for us to travel up it almost without being aware that it was the same waterway along which we had paddled a short time before, while the vagaries of wind and weather and the experiences that befell us from time to time all helped to stave off boredom.

One of our first stopping-places on this part of the trip was the Caraja village of Capitao Joao, named after its chief, which is situated three hundred miles from the nearest white man's habitation. Here life pursues the even tenor of its way very much in the same fashion as it did long centuries ago. The huts comprising the village are built of thin sticks covered with palm leaves. They are arranged in a more or less straight line, facing the river, with the space of a single hut between each. At first my presence was noted with as much awe and circumspection as that of some little-known wild animal. The children clung to their mothers for fear of the "white devil," while the mothers themselves seemed loth to make my closer acquaintance. Far more bold and

Caraja Indians in their canoes.

inquisitive were the big scarlet macaws that circled about me, or screeched defiantly at me from the roofs. I wanted to make friends with the people, so I produced gifts of fish-hooks, mirrors, beads, handkerchiefs of many colours, and dolls. The dolls in particular sufficed to establish my popularity in the village.

Capitao Joao himself was a quiet, unobtrusive man, who nevertheless exercised powers of life and death over his little community. He was greatly troubled by a swelling of one knee, caused, he explained, by an arrow wound sustained in a fight with the Tapirapès. Between this tribe and their neighbours, the Carajas, there still exists an ancient feud, which occasionally finds expression in warfare of the most primitive and bloodthirsty description.

Somewhat to my surprise, O-di-di intervened in our conversation at this point and took up the tale. The chief's reference to the racial enmity existing between the two tribes seemed to have touched some hidden chord of memory. He suddenly straightened up; his features became twisted, and his eyes glared hate. For the moment O-di-di was a totally different being.

A TRIBAL WAR.

A short time before, it appeared, four Carajas had been treacherously murdered by the Tapirapès, one of the victims being O-di-di's brother. The Carajas, ordinarily a peaceful people, determined to have revenge, and organized a punitive party. Crossing the river in *ubas*, or canoes, they pushed up into the Tapirapè territory in search of their enemies, arriving in sight of the largest settlement early one morning. Leaving the river banks, the Carajas advanced on all fours, each man holding in front of him a branch of the Buriti palm, by way of disguising his presence from the Tapirapès.

Having encircled the village, they closed in on it and, with a concerted yell, rushed forward, brandishing their weapons. Ten minutes later the place was in flames, every one of its male inhabitants having been butchered.

The chief of Capitao Joao at the door of his hut.

As O-di-di related this appalling story his eyes became dilated, his muscles twitched, and his lips were set in a sort of sneering smile. Suddenly he sprang up, grasped his club, flourished it in the air and, without a word of warning, brought it down on my head—with the gentlest of gentle taps!

I must confess that I was more than a little startled at his behaviour. His description of the massacre, in which he took an active part, was, in fact, altogether too realistic for me, and I was glad when the conversation took another turn.

The village of Capitao Joao.

At one hut in Capitao Joao's village I witnessed a curious operation. A young Indian was busily engaged in planting a thick pole in the sandy floor. Having done this, he gripped the pole with both hands. A companion then proceeded to massage him with a small flat brush, the bristles of which had been replaced by rows of sharp-pointed fish teeth, about an eighth of an inch long. During this painful operation, which lasted several seconds, the victim clenched his teeth and grasped the pole tightly, but uttered no sound, although the blood flowed freely from the lacerations.

As soon as the ordeal was over, the victim rushed out of the hut and, with a shout of relief, plunged headlong into the river, where he spent some time in cleansing his wounds. The scars of this terrible test of endurance are to be seen on many Indians, more particularly on the back and legs. They are regarded as a panacea for many of the ills which afflict mankind in that part of the world.

Standing at one end of the village, about a hundred yards from the nearest hut, was a solitary structure known as the "house of the wild beasts." It contained a number of huge and fantastic head-dresses, three or four feet in height, together with some weird costumes. At certain periods these costumes and head-pieces are worn by the men of the village, who indulge in dancing of a superstitious origin, when their savage instincts often get the upper hand. No Caraja woman dare enter or approach this mysterious hut, the penalty for so doing being death in a very terrible form.

A Caraja settlement.

THE DEATH BOW.

Mention of the subject to Capitao Joao caused him to remind me gravely that the same strict rule applies to all Carajas, regardless of sex, who disobey their chief or flout the traditions of the tribe. Capital punishment is generally carried out with the aid of a small bow and arrow, which weapon the chief, as a mark of special favour, produced for my inspection. The bow proved to be only four inches in length,

with a correspondingly diminutive arrow, but the latter is tipped with a most deadly poison.

Waking early on the morning of our departure from the village Manoel discovered with many lamentations that he had been bitten during the night by a vampire bat which had attacked him, as usual, on the big toe. These horrible creatures make the incision so gently that the victim is quite unaware of their presence as they suck the blood, the only evidence of their attentions being a slight scratch, or what looks like a scratch, and, of course, blood-stains. The only sure way of baffling the vampire is by keeping oneself well covered up, especially the lower extremities, although it sometimes chooses the neck for its operations. We were troubled by these obnoxious pests on three separate occasions at this stage of the trip—a fact I mention specially because so many people at home continue to believe that the blood-sucking propensities of the vampire bat are legendary rather than founded on fact.

During the earlier part of the journey we were escorted by two Caraja *ubas*, each containing two tribesmen. Every few hours one or other of the Indians, feeling the heat, would drop his pole and plunge into the river—an admirably unconventional way of keeping cool. Now and then, too, one would seize his bow and arrow and, taking a hurried aim, would shoot a fish or a passing bird.

INDIAN FISH-SHOOTING.

As I had so far seen little fish-shooting I decided one morning to accompany two of the Indians on one of their fishing expeditions. Leaving the *igarite*, I embarked in one of the *ubas*, leaving O-di-di and the rest of my little party to their own devices for the time being. The two redskins, in whose canoe I took my seat, quickly paddled away ahead of the others and soon we were out of sight, threading our way through the many channels that intersected the country at this point.

The *uba* shot through the water at a great pace and I had doubts of our safety, for the little craft behaved as only a keel-less hollow log could be expected to behave. We seemed to ship water at every stroke, and every few minutes it was necessary to run up on a sandbank and bale the cranky craft out.

Watching the Indians shoot fish was a pastime I thoroughly enjoyed. By the rippling of the water or some other sign known only to themselves, they would detect the presence of a fish in a certain spot. With a twang an arrow flew into the water, disappeared for a moment, and then came to the surface again, violently agitated. A second arrow followed the first; then, after a wait of several minutes, both reappeared floating inertly some distance away—a sign that the fish was either dead or exhausted. If it still lived the Indians leapt overboard and headed it into the shallows, where it was quickly dispatched with a blow on the head. The marksmanship shown was wonderful.

Presently we entered what I imagined was the main stream, some distance down which we could discern the *igarite*, looking like a speck on the silvery water. We therefore pulled into a creek to await its arrival, while I jumped ashore to stretch my rather cramped legs.

Some time elapsed, and no *igarite* appeared. Growing impatient, the Indians poled off in search of her, returning shortly afterwards with the news that no trace of her could be found. The only conclusion that I could come to was that O-di-di and his companions had by mistake taken a hidden channel—a rather alarming possibility, since the backwaters and creeks of the Araguaya frequently form a maze that defies all attempts at intelligent navigation.

As there was no time to be lost, I decided that one of the two Indians should take the canoe upstream, while his companion and I traversed the intervening ground on foot on the chance of discovering the *igarite's* hidden passage. An hour's steady tramping brought us to another broad channel, but to my discomfiture no craft was in sight.

LOST!

Knowing the difficulties of finding one's way amid the labyrinthine passages of the river, I entertained the gravest fears concerning the situation in which we now found ourselves. Many an Indian, I reflected, had been lost amid these myriad waterways. What chance was there for me, an inexperienced white man? The prospect of being left practically alone, hundreds of miles from civilization, did not appeal to me at all, and a mood of black depression fell upon me. I determined, however, to make at least one more effort to solve the problem of the *igarite's* whereabouts.

Again we struck off across country, taking an angle this time which seemed likely to bring us out considerably nearer the channel which we judged the *igarite* had taken.

The journey that followed was one of the most difficult I have ever experienced. Every step of the way was an agony in itself, the ground being strewn with prickly creepers, brambles, and jagged stones. An hour and a half of this, during which time my bare feet were torn almost to shreds, found me utterly exhausted and unable to proceed. My Indian companion therefore indicated a short cut back to the channel we had left, and along this I made my way as well as I was able.

Reaching the river bank I noticed, halfway across, some abandoned Indian huts

standing on a small bank of sand, and as they offered at least shelter for the night, I suggested swimming out to them. But the Indian would not hear of this, at least so far as he was concerned, indicating that nothing would induce him to enter the river at this point for fear of the *piranha*, the fierce little cannibal fish of Brazil, of whose bite he had already had experience. Feeling by this time more or less desperate, I resolved to take the plunge alone: in fact I was on the verge of doing so when an exclamation from my companion drew my attention to a moving speck away down the river—our missing "dug-out"! I do not think I was ever more relieved or thankful in my life than I was at that moment, an emotion which the Indian seemed to share, for he waved his arms and halloaed excitedly.

Extraordinary ceremonial costumes used in tribal dances.

But alas! these manifestations of delight were premature and short-lived, for it soon became apparent that the crew of the *igarite* had not only neither seen nor heard us, but that they were rapidly paddling out of sight! Perceiving this, I shouted frantically and waved my coat on a stick without, however, succeeding in attracting their attention. A few minutes afterwards the "dug-out" bore to the left and glided away up a channel we had not noticed. Here was a pretty predicament, if you like!

Feeling decidedly "blue," I flung myself down on the bank, while the Indian continued to keep a sharp look-out. An hour passed; then another, bringing not the slightest sign of the *igarite*. Our plight assumed a most gloomy aspect, and I do not mind confessing that for the time being I gave myself up for lost, faced with the prospect of slow starvation, as well as with the by-no-means-remote chance of being attacked by hostile tribesmen. But, although we were unaware of it, help was at hand.

Late in the afternoon I was awakened from the fitful sleep into which I had fallen with the news that the *uba* containing the second Indian was in sight and bearing down in our direction. This time our shouts proved effective; the Indian shot towards us at great speed, pleased at being the means of bringing about our rescue. Half an hour afterwards we drew alongside the *igarite*, whose crew had decided to pass the night in the vicinity, prior to starting off the first thing in the morning to report me as missing. Luckily they were spared this necessity.

Our voyage during the next few days was broken by several shore excursions, undertaken either for the purpose of obtaining game or of visiting Indian villages. Returning

to the river one afternoon I espied a fine black jaguar, or Brazilian tiger, perhaps the most fearsome of the wild animals to be found in that country, stalking majestically along the bank. Raising my gun, I fired, less with the intention of killing or wounding it than with a desire to see just how it would behave. This particular member of the species leapt round at the sound of the shot and faced me with glaring eyes and bared teeth. Then it turned again and, with a low growl, made off into the forest. The Indians are much afraid of the black jaguar, which they say is very aggressive and dangerous.

When we reached the mouth of the Rio dos Mortos (River of the Dead), and headed the *igarite* up its mysterious waters, my Caraja companions began to show signs of uneasiness—a state of mind due, I found, to their fear of meeting the Chavantes, another hostile tribe. Every now and then they scanned the banks apprehensively, and once I felt certain that the enemy had been sighted, for one of the Indians suddenly threw down his pole and dived into the river, his lithe, red body shooting rapidly into the crystal-clear depths. What was the meaning of this strange conduct? A moment or two later the question was satisfactorily answered by the reappearance of the red-skin, who held in his arms a fine large turtle!

After a few hours' paddling I decided—much to the Indians' relief—to postpone further exploration of the river until a later date. We therefore turned about and were soon gliding once more up the Araguaya.

Being anxious to get back to St. Leopoldina without unnecessary delay, I resolved to devote less time than formerly to calling at the riverside villages, as not only was my stock of presents running low, but my food supplies—always impoverished after a sojourn among the Indians—were giving out. Accordingly I made a bargain with the Indians who were accompanying me that if they would supply me with fish and game I would allow them a small share of my rice and *farinha*, which they greatly esteem.

One of the results of this arrangement was that among other odd delicacies, chameleons became a feature of our *menu*. The chameleon in these parts averages from three to five feet in length, and its bright green hue makes it a difficult target for the hunter. Nevertheless the Indians spotted many of them from midstream, so acute is their vision, and I allowed the "dug-out" to pull in to the side while they shot the creatures. One chameleon, on being missed by the arrow, promptly plunged from its tree-top retreat into the river, where it seemed as much at home as on the land. Another, although wounded, remained in the branches and its captor was forced to climb up the tree in order to secure it, while a third was shot outright. Shortly after this, Wirina, one of the Indians, dived into the river and brought up a most curious sort of fish, weighing about six pounds. Besides having two sharp-pointed fins, it had on either side a row of claws, closely resembling the teeth of a large circular saw and looking every bit as efficient. Duck-shooting was another form of sport at which the Indians proved adept, and when we reached the higher and shallower reaches of the river many a fine bird of this species was added to our larder.

The *uba* that came to Mr. Glass's rescue when he was lost in the jungle.

At this juncture there occurred one of those minor experiences, involving both tragedy and comedy, which helped to redeem the last stages of our trip from the monotony with which, as we were now rapidly nearing civilization, it was now and then threatened. An old Indian chief, enduring agonies from toothache, put out in a *uba* from his village as we approached, and begged me to afford him relief from his suffering. Unfortunately I had by this time exhausted practically the whole of my medical requisites, of which there remained only a bottle or two of liver salts and a small bottle of spirits of ammonia. Thinking that the latter might ease the old fellow's pain, if only by that very potent agency

Where the Rio dos Mortos joins the Araguaya.

"suggestion," I handed him the bottle, with instructions to inhale it slowly. As Fate would have it, however, the old fellow misunderstood the direction I had given him and promptly swallowed the lot!

Here my memory of the incident becomes blurred, as I have no doubt the chief's did, too! I have a vague recollection of seeing his face contorted with pain and hearing him spluttering and groaning. But I did not stop to confirm this fleeting impression, for, realizing that the consequences of the error might be serious, not only for the chief but for me, I ordered my crew to paddle off as quickly as possible—an unchivalrous retreat, but quite the wisest way out of the difficulty in the circumstances.

Soon after this we approached St. Leopoldina, and so our long journey came to an end, although there still lay ahead of me four days' ride overland by mule. Altogether we had spent just over two months on the river—an experience which will always stand out in my mind as one of the most memorable of a fairly full and varied life.

A CURIOUS IMAGE.

□ □ □

The accompanying photograph was taken by Miss Beatrice Grimshaw, the well-known authoress, on the island of Malekula, in the New Hebrides, and depicts a curious image carved by native artists. The remarkable thing about the effigy is that the face is distinctly of mediæval Spanish type, complete even to the moustache, and utterly unlike any native type. It is supposed by scientific authorities that the figure has some connection with the Spanish explorers who visited the islands in the sixteenth century.

The Sea Devil

By
ERNEST ARTHUR PLUMMER, J.P.
and Commissioner for Oaths, Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I.

ILLUSTRATED BY T H. ROBINSON

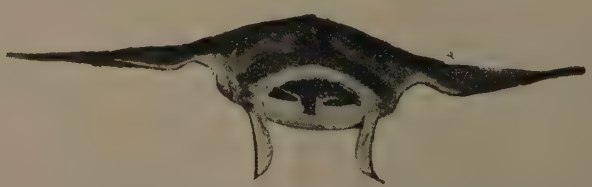
The story of an extraordinary six-hour battle with a huge West Indian manta, or ray—a creature looking something like a monstrous bat and capable, as the narrative shows, of putting up a terrific fight. Very few fishermen would care to undergo the experience so graphically described by Mr. Plummer.

MANY years ago, when I was quite a youth, I had my first opportunity of accompanying a party of expert fishermen on a harpooning expedition in our West Indian *bocas*.

The waters of these *bocas*, it should be explained (which collectively form the Boca de Dragos, or Dragons' Mouths), wash the shores between the north-eastern promontory of the Republic of Venezuela and the north-western headland of Trinidad, British West Indies, and being exceptionally fruitful fishing-grounds, afford the keenest pleasure to the hunter of such big finny game as the manta or giant ray, ocean-gar or sail-fish, dolphin, tarpon, barracuda, king-fish, cavalli, and some others of minor importance. That marine murderer, the black ocean shark, or *tintorero*, is also to be found.

I had been spending my Easter holidays with my brother-in-law, Mr. James Basanta, at his well-appointed and comfortable seaside resort, Balmoral Bay, Monos, one of the most popular of the many pretty bays of this well-known watering-place.

We had with us, in addition to other members of the family, a number of friends, the party comprising an assembly of experienced and seasoned fishermen.



A typical giant ray. This particular specimen measured twelve feet across the "wings," and weighed two thousand pounds.

One morning, while we were all sitting at the breakfast-table, the suggestion was made that a harpooning expedition should be undertaken in quest of the manta, or "sea-devil," which just at that time of the year—June-July—is always plentiful in and about these waters. With the exception of the orca, or sea-tiger, found principally round the islands of Southern California, the manta is the most savage and revengeful fish that swims.

Of course, among such keen and dauntless fishermen, the proposal was eagerly welcomed and adopted, and preparations for the excursion were immediately set on foot. These were very soon complete, all that was needed being at hand, such as harpoons, spears, gaffs, stout lines, and more particularly a newly-built whale-boat which had been launched only a few days before.

We left the same afternoon, thirteen of us—the unlucky thirteen—embarking in the boat. Six sturdy black oarsmen formed the crew, with an old man named Abram in the stern.

The sea was very calm and therefore favourable, for manta are peculiarly given to disporting themselves while feeding in a quiet sea.

Our objective was the Boca Huevos, or Second Boca, as this entrance is commonly called,

so we steered a westerly course until we had rounded the point or cape of Domus Bay, which lies due east of the island of Huevos.

It was early in the evening—about 6.30—and all was quiet save for the lapping of the wavelets against the sides of the big boat, when we first sighted our manta, and the barbed harpoon promptly sped on its way, followed in quick succession by a second and third. All struck home, whereupon the great fish leapt out of the water to a height of about fifteen feet, its expansive, bat-like wings opening and shutting in its maddened efforts to shake off the cruel barbs. And, as it rose menacingly, we gazed at it in amazement and some trepidation.

When first seen gliding gracefully along just under the surface, the manta appeared to be about twelve feet across the wings, whereas the demon we looked upon in the air was a colossus of terrific proportions. There was a great upheaval of water and a sound like the boom of a big gun as the stupendous form came down again on to the surface of the sea and disappeared from view.

The three lines literally smoked over the gunwale of the rocking boat as the wounded creature rushed madly away. Apart entirely from the futility of such an attempt, no effort whatever was made to stay the racing monster, for the very excellent reason that the first rush of a wounded manta is so swift that any attempt to arrest its impetuous course would undoubtedly cause the vindictive brute to turn upon the boat at too short a distance from it to allow of anything like skilful steering, thereby subjecting its occupants to the risk of imminent death. The enraged creature, therefore, was wisely allowed to run at will. Not finding any marked resistance in its race for liberty it gradually slackened speed.

The lines were then gathered in by eager hands and the fight began in grim earnest.

Once again the maimed and angry ray sped away, but this time at right angles to the course it had first taken, which sudden and unexpected turn necessitated rapid and dexterous manœuvring on the part of our steersman. Very soon the longboat, with its silent crew, rounded the north-eastern headland of Chacachacare, cutting through the water at a terrific rate.

Night, which descends with such suddenness in the tropics, had now fallen, and there was no moon to relieve the pall of black which enveloped us. Our eyes peered anxiously through abysmal gloom.

Our old steersman, however, was unflurried as he plied his long paddle, giving an occasional order to our six oarsmen. He was well-schooled in the position of these Bocas and their hidden dangers, having for upwards of threescore years traversed them frequently in his calling of fisherman.

These whale-boats were not fitted with rudders, but were always steered by means of paddles, Indian fashion. Being bow-ended, moreover, they were peculiarly well adapted to such dangerous tasks as the one which now confronted us.

As far as I could judge, we must have travelled at break-neck speed for about fifteen miles, when, without warning, the gigantic creature swerved until the lines fell slack. Then, leaping out of the water at intervals, it dashed straight towards us!

Old Abram, keenly on the alert, kept the boat facing the oncoming monster, and, as it approached, the sagging lines were quickly and dexterously reclaimed.

"Let her run," called Abram, in the stillness of the black night, and oars were laid in and six deadly lances gripped firmly. Then, as the big fish came at us in the phosphorescent water, our steersman changed the course of the gliding boat ever so slightly and the enraged fish missed its objective and shot swiftly alongside within easy striking distance. Down hurtled the lances held by the oarsmen, and the monster continued its mad career with six business-like prongs embedded deeply in its leathery black back.

The clouds were now thickening overhead, and soon a nor'-westerly wind began to rise. But the motor-boat rate at which we were dashing through the waters, straight in the direction of Punta Penas, the most north-easterly promontory of the Republic of Venezuela, never slacked for an instant.

I am not ordinarily of a nervous temperament, but I must say that, chiefly through inexperience, I was on this occasion in a pitiable state of funk. I was at a loss to understand why my companions allowed the enraged brute to race on; I wondered why they did not cut the creature loose and go home—and I fervently wished they would before he drowned the lot of us.

Quite unexpectedly the lines slacked again. The monster had changed his course, and we were in doubt for a time as to exactly where he was. But not for long! The brute had been doubling on his tracks while we pondered, and now, with leopard-like swiftness, he emerged from the water close alongside and leapt straight at the boat. Three more lances struck him as he fell back.

It was impossible for old Abram to guide the heaving longboat entirely clear of the falling monster, although he used his paddle with wonderful dexterity. The tip of one of the great black wings struck the side of the boat at one end, while the other wing came down with a resounding splash on the sea. Every timber cracked sickeningly as the craft heeled over, but, most fortunately for us, she righted herself once more. By the time the commotion subsided the monster had again disappeared from view.

The boat, we discovered, had sprung several leaks as a result of the terrific impact, and was filling fast. We were soon busy

with repairs, however, and it did not take us long to put things in order, oakum, handspikes, and hammers being handy.

I had done a good deal of caulking in my time, so I applied myself assiduously to the job while the others centred their attention on matters of equally vital importance to our safety.

There were now white faces—I couldn't see the black ones—and set teeth in the racing boat, for the wild and seemingly tireless rushes of the angry manta were not by any means conducive to peace of mind or comfort of body. Moreover, the wind was still rising, and the boat was driving before a gale, which, as ill-luck would have it, assisted the "sea-devil" in its mad career.

The great fish was now round the most easterly headland of the Spanish Main, still travelling at an incredible speed, and heading straight for the island of Chacachacare.

The situation was decidedly ugly, for we realized that until we had cleared the dangerous coast around that particular spot we were in imminent peril of being wrecked on some hidden rock.

I crouched in the bottom of the pitching boat, wet through and shivering. Why on earth didn't they cut the lines and let us get back to the shore in safety?

Then, in his usual steady voice, old Abram gave us a message of comfort:

"It won't be long now," he called out. "He is tiring, and will soon run high and dry."

However, our trials were not by any means over, for the brute had deviated from its former course, and was now carrying us in the direction of Patos, or Goose Island, which lies due south of Penas Punta—a direction we had no desire to be dragged in.

Its action, moreover, knocked on the head Abram's theory that the great fish would soon beach itself.

Nevertheless, after the longboat had been dragged in this direction for a distance of about six miles, we observed with feelings of infinite relief that the sorely-wounded creature, despite its marvellous vitality and evident determination not to be mastered, was undoubtedly in great distress. The terrific strain on the lines slackened and our speed grew noticeably less.

It is a well-known fact that the giant ray, when mortally wounded and tired out, with its pursuers close in its wake, will invariably change its course. The moment it showed signs of weakening, therefore, Abram bent eagerly forward.

"Now we get him!" he shouted. "Row like blazes, boys! Gentlemen, ease your lines and let him run free! He will soon turn now!"

And so it befell.

Tossing and tumbling, the manta pursued an aimless course for about a mile farther, the boat no longer pulled along by it but propelled by the "boys" with all their might.

The ray had now all but reached the end of its tether, and was coming up to us on the surface of the water, still struggling. He had, of course, been terribly wounded, and we soon realized that he had lost his instinctive sense of direction. The order was therefore given to tow and guide him in the direction of Huevos Bay, a lovely stretch of beach shown in one of the illustrations, on which we knew he would eventually beach himself. Another peculiar habit of these bat-like creatures is that, the moment they are beaten, they always endeavour to run themselves high and dry on a beach.

We had laboured along in this manner for a distance of about eight miles, and were slowly but surely nearing our objective, when Abram sounded a warning note.

"These varmints rise when nearing shallow water," he said, "and they're cussed creatures to deal with. Any object they see above them is in danger, for they 'heave' just under it. Sit tight and be on your guard, because anything may happen."

Presently we entered the still waters of the bay, the big manta now floundering painfully. He had not "sounded" yet, and we sincerely hoped that he would not do so, because we were only too well aware that in that event there was trouble in store for us.

To make matters worse we discovered, when mid-way into the bay, that a party of night-seiners had already cast their net and were in the act of hauling it in. These seine-nets are very large, and when thrown take in the whole expanse of beach, so that great hauls are sometimes made.

We were quite near to the swaying seine—only about ten yards away from it, in fact—when our boat was suddenly hurled into the air and turned turtle within the meshes of the straining net!

Our feelings can better be imagined than described. The situation was one of unique peril, made even graver because of our knowledge that, when these bays are being "seined" at night, huge sharks are often enclosed.

In the pitch darkness the mortally wounded ray was tearing the big net into fragments, floundering madly in its final efforts to release itself. The waters of the peaceful bay were literally lashed into fury by the dying leviathan, while we ourselves were struggling for dear life in our frenzied efforts to reach the longed-for beach.

While this fearful pandemonium was in progress the terrified negro fishermen ashore were bawling that "The devil himself had come to them," and were rushing headlong about the beach—some into boat-houses and bathrooms, others into the bush. These blacks are not cowards at heart, but they are extremely superstitious, and the night

"I felt myself gripped firmly under the arms and dragged out of harm's way."

was so dark that they could not possibly see what was actually happening.

Still the "sea-devil's" great wings churned the water to foam while it struggled on towards the beach, hampered by the big seine, which was afterwards found to be damaged beyond any hope of repair.

In the light of day things would have been different, but the night was so oppressively dark that we could not distinguish anything at all, which added to the dangers of our predicament. But we were in the shallows, and therefore had some faint hope of eventually getting to land, as we could feel the gradual rising of the sandy bottom.

Alternately swimming and wading, I was the first to reach the beach, where, digging my numbed fingers into the sand, I literally dragged myself high and dry, more dead than alive. I lay inert and gasping for breath for some considerable time, quite unable to rise.

At this moment, just when light was vital to our safety, by great good fortune the moon rose majestically over the mountain.

I saw my companions staggering through the shallows to the shore. Behind them the great black manta, obviously in its death throes, was coming straight towards where I lay! Suddenly I felt myself gripped firmly under the arms and dragged out of harm's way. I did not know at the time who my rescuer was, but I found out afterwards that it was faithful old Abram. Had he not come to my aid at the right moment the ray would have passed over my helpless body and battered me into pulp!

At last the manta dragged himself on to the beach like a mighty maimed bat, flapping his gigantic wings and moving slowly and painfully. The sand was thrown in all directions as the bulky form progressed, but his hour had come.

The scared blacks of the bay, directly the moon rose, had realized what was happening, and now, returning to the beach with storm-lanterns, they at once proceeded to finish off the ray.

The eastern side of Huevos Bay, where the giant ray beached himself.

When the battle was over we got a tape-line from the house and measured the monster. He spanned twenty-eight feet across the wings!

There was, of course, no means of ascertaining his weight, for a weighbridge and a steam derrick would have been necessary. I have since seen one, however—a small specimen, which was caught off Brighton pier, on the west coast of the island—which measured twelve feet across and weighed close upon two thousand pounds, so I estimate that our monster's weight must have been in the neighbourhood of two tons.

I was very much concerned at the time as to how the great bulk of flesh, bone, and sinew was to be got rid of. It occurred to me that were it allowed to remain there pestilence would be the natural outcome, but on mentioning my fears to Abram and the others they merely laughed. They reminded me that the tide was low, and that in six hours' time the water would be at the full again, when there would be little trouble in floating the ray and towing it out to sea, where sharks would very soon devour it.

I fell asleep while the others lay about and chatted, but was finally awakened by animated voices all round me. Hastily I jumped up, to find that the time was a few minutes after six, and that all hands were busy.

The tide had reached high-water mark, and the great mass of flesh was already floating. The bay was literally swarming with sharks which had begun to attack the body, vying with one another in tearing the carcass to pieces.

Hurriedly we towed the dead monster out to sea, where it was cut loose and slowly drifted out of sight, accompanied by scores of sharks and myriads of sea-birds.

As for ourselves, it did not take us very long to get back to Balmoral Bay, for we had not eaten since lunch-time the previous day and were famishing and all but spent.

Thus ended one of the most hair-raising fishing adventures I have ever experienced.

Where the Gold Went

by

CHARLES A. SIRINGO

ILLUSTRATED BY W. C. NICOLSON

A detective's story of a very unusual case—the discovery and pursuit of two men who had robbed the famous Treadwell mine in Alaska of ten thousand dollars' worth of gold. It was a cold trail, and there was no apparent clue, but after a long chase Mr. Siringo and his companion succeeded in arresting the thieves and recovering the stolen gold.

IN February, 1895, the writer was employed by Mr. Duncan, the superintendent of the famous Treadwell gold mine in Alaska, to discover and run down thieves who had stolen ten thousand dollars' worth of gold from the Treadwell mill—at that time one of the largest in the world.

It was agreed that I should choose as an assistant a man who could be trusted, and I selected W. Boxwell Sayles, an Englishman. We arranged that he was to leave Denver, Colorado, two weeks after I started for the mine.

Arriving by steamer at Juneau, a town built on stilts along the water-front, I at once wrote to Superintendent Duncan informing him of my presence.

Late in the evening I received a reply from him, telling me to take a launch and come out to Douglas Island, three miles across the bay, after dark. Here I was to meet Mr. Duncan and his assistant, Mr. Corbus, in a secluded place, so that no one would know of the interview.

At this meeting matters connected with the theft were discussed. The robbery, it appeared, had taken place early in the winter, and three detectives had been sent from Portland, Oregon, to ferret out the guilty parties. After investigating for three months, at great expense to the Treadwell Mining Company, the detectives were sent home, having failed to get so much as a clue.

All that Mr. Duncan could tell me was that a tank in the chlorination works had been emptied of solution late one evening, so that the gold in the bottom could be taken out early next morning.

When the workmen went to clean the tank they found it empty. The lock on the rear door of the room was broken. Just outside the door, in the deep snow which had fallen during the night, stood a crowbar that had been used in breaking the lock. It was estimated that the vanished gold was worth ten thousand dollars, and no trace of it or of the thieves had been discovered.

It was a cold trail right enough, and the case looked none too hopeful, but I promised to do my best. I had adopted the name of "Lee Roy Davis" after leaving Denver, and it was agreed that under this name I should apply to Mr. Corbus for a job in the big gold mill, so as not to create suspicion among the hundreds of mill workmen.

It was thought best that I should be engaged as a machine oiler, as this work would take me to all parts of the mill, so that I could make the acquaintance of the employees.

Two days later I duly applied to Mr. Corbus for a job, and he engaged me to work and put me on the night shift, oiling machinery. The man whose place I was to take spent the first night teaching me my job, and it required all the courage I

could muster to accompany him on his rounds, traversing narrow planks high up in the air and wriggling about among revolving wheels and belts.

Gradually, however, I got the hang of the work and was soon getting on quite well. Some time later, while on the day shift, I received a letter from Sayles, who had reached Juneau.

That night, after supper, a ferry launch took me across the bay to Juneau, where Sayles and I met to talk over our plan of campaign.

From what I had been able to learn from the mill employees, I had come to the conclusion that two men named Charlie Hubbard and Hiram Schell, who had left the mill and departed for parts unknown, were the thieves. Both these men had worked in the chlorination plant before and after the robbery.

On the night of the theft, I discovered, Schell had sent word to the foreman by his friend Hubbard, that he was sick and unable to work. This led me to believe that he might have pretended to be ill so as to commit the robbery.

A further suspicious circumstance was the fact that three months after the robbery these two men had bought a small schooner and sailed west, telling no one of their destination.

I instructed Sayles to search the Indian villages for a suitable canoe in which we could set out on the trail of Hubbard and Schell.

When the time came for me to leave, I staged a little accident, so as to avert any suspicion, and after seeing the doctor drew my pay and went down to Juneau to recover from a supposed crippled arm.

Sayles had a fine canoe picked out for my inspection, and after looking it over we bought it from the Indian owner. It was forty feet long, hewed out of a single cedar tree. Both ends rose high above the sides so as to ward off the waves in rough waters, and the craft was painted in all the colours of the rainbow.

We moored her near our hotel and loaded her up for a long trip. A good supply of provisions was purchased; also cooking utensils and two new large-calibre Winchester rifles, with plenty of ammunition. To finish the cargo, a tent and bedding and twenty-five gallons of Canadian rye whisky were put aboard.

Our object in carrying the liquor was to pass ourselves off as illicit whisky-pedlars, in case we came across Hubbard and Schell.

We started west one morning, using the single sail as the wind was favourable. The mast and sail could be taken down when required and the oars used instead. A broad paddle served in place of a rudder.

After being out a few days, navigating many channels, little and big, we discovered by experience that the best time to travel was at night, when the water is as smooth as glass. In Alaska the sun sets about ten p.m. in the summer season, and rises about three a.m., the time between being almost as light as day.

It is very seldom that the wind blows at night, which made it necessary for Sayles and me to take turns at using the oars to keep the canoe moving.

Many Indians, their faces and hands blackened with a thick paste to ward off the flies and mosquitoes, were encountered in every direction, in canoes of various sizes. They were members of the Chieke, Chilcat, and Sitka tribes, and a few could talk broken English.

Finally we came to what showed on our chart as Cootch-in-aboo Head. Here was the mouth of a river, up which the tide was flowing at a rapid rate. We concluded to make an exploration trip, so long as the swift current carried us forward, thinking that perhaps Hubbard and Schell might be in hiding at the head of the stream, which was a quarter of a mile wide.

After travelling all the afternoon we came to a large Chilcat Indian village, and hundreds of the redskins came down to the river front to see the two strange white men. Some of them could talk a little English, and they told us we were the first whites who had visited their village for many years. From this we concluded that Schell and Hubbard had never been there, so that our trip was useless. The next day we returned to Cootch-in-aboo Head, where we spent a day fishing for halibut.

A few days after leaving Cootch-in-aboo Head we landed on the shores of Funter's Bay.

We were now on the west coast of Admiralty Island, having come round the north end of this great unexplored, heavily-timbered, and mountainous island. The island is said to be about one hundred and fifty miles long from north to south, and about a hundred miles wide from east to west. Indians live round its borders, but the higher mountains in the interior are uninhabited and alive with game. The Indians told us it was almost impossible for a man to reach the summit of the mountain range on account of fallen timber and "devil's clubs"—a dense growth with sharp thorns like eagles' claws.

From Funter's Bay, Sayles and I sailed west across an inlet, fifteen or twenty miles wide, to Bischoff Island, another mass of mountains. Along its eastern borders we visited many Sitka Indian villages, but failed to find any trace of Schell and Hubbard or their little schooner.

Among the Indians who understood the English language we made inquiries about a waterfall over a thousand feet in height. We claimed to be searching for the "Lost

"We came to a large Chilcat village, and hundreds of the redskins came down to see the two strange white men."

Rocker" gold mine, originally discovered by two Russian soldiers who had deserted from the Russian army when Alaska was owned by that country. According to the story told in San Francisco, California, by these men, they had found the gold they carried—which was sold to a saloon-keeper—near the foot of a waterfall which tumbled over a cliff nearly two thousand feet high.

As the story went, this saloon man had secured a plan from the Russian soldiers which showed the route they had taken, travelling in a canoe from Fort Sitka to the great waterfall. This plan, or map, was passed on by the saloon-keeper to his son who, when he had grown to manhood, made up a party to search for the waterfall and the mine. They failed, however, to find either.

The Indians told me there was a great waterfall at the head of Chieke Bay, on the west coast of Admiralty Island, about twenty miles south of Killisnoo, an Indian village, where passenger steamers plying between Juneau and Sitka stopped for a few hours.

We therefore turned the nose of our canoe towards the east and, arriving at Killisnoo, got directions as to the best route to Chieke Bay, twenty miles farther south.

A day's travel brought us to the large Indian village of Chieke, in Chieke Bay, where we gave a simultaneous shout of joy on catching sight of the little schooner owned by Schell and Hubbard anchored on the water front, where hundreds of canoes were tied up. We knew the vessel from the description I had received from her former owner.

We went ashore, erected our tent on the beach, and cooked our supper. Indians came to our camp by the hundreds. Among them was a white man of middle age, standing over six feet. We didn't ask his name; we knew he was Charlie Hubbard, one of the supposed gold thieves we were in quest of. He was invited into the tent, out of sight of the Indians, and told to help himself to whisky from a gallon jug. He took two full glasses before going back to the fireside.

At a suitable opportunity we told Hubbard the story of the "Lost Rocker" mine and the great waterfall which, we said, we had heard was at the head of Chieke Bay. Hubbard informed us that there was such a waterfall some three miles east of the village; he had heard its roar many a time on still days. He had never been to it, he added, but he had heard the Indians refer to its great height.

Later, I told him confidentially that we had whisky to sell at $2·50 a quart, but not to Indians while we were camped in their village. Hubbard promptly bought a quart for himself, keeping it hidden from the sight of the redskins.

When the crowd had dispersed, Sayles and I retired for the night feeling we had made a good beginning.

Early next morning the tall white man came down to our camp again. He had breakfast with us and afterwards conducted us up to his quarters in a primitive bark shack.

Finally another white man entered the hut in which we sat. He was introduced as Hiram Schell, and was a medium-sized, middle-aged, evil-looking fellow. Our search for the suspected gold thieves was over!

Fearing that a raid might be made on our camp for the whisky, I suggested to Sayles that we should hurry up to the head of the bay to see if the waterfall there was the one we were searching for.

When we took our departure, about ten next morning, Hubbard volunteered to pilot us to the head of the bay in his small canoe. We thanked him for his kind offer, although we knew that his real object was to keep in touch with our supply of liquor.

The trip to the head of the bay was made in quick time, as the tide was in our favour.

When we were within a mile of the waterfall the noise became deafening, and we found it to be the largest any of us had ever seen. Its source was near the summit of a high mountain a few miles distant, where we could see a glacier. An immense body of foaming, ice-cold water tumbled over a sheer cliff about a thousand feet high a few hundred yards from the shore of the bay.

To avoid the spray from the fall, we had to pitch our camp quite a distance away in a grove of timber. Here a permanent camp was established so that we could prospect for the gold we were supposed to be in search of.

Hubbard liked our Canadian rye whisky so much that he decided to stay all night, sleeping by my side in the large tent.

Next morning, after breakfast, Sayles and I started out with gold pan, pick, and shovel, to prospect for gold near the foot of the waterfall. Hubbard returned to Chieke in his canoe, taking two bottles of whisky with him for his friends.

That evening several canoes loaded with Indians came to our camp to buy liquor. Hubbard had told his intimates among the Indians that we were whisky-pedlars. This suited us, as it allayed suspicions regarding our presence, and in order to carry out our assumed characters we sold them several quart bottles of the liquor, telling them that this was all we could spare.

Soon after we had eaten breakfast next day the big chief of the Chieke village, accompanied by several sub-chiefs, came to our camp and ordered us to sell no more whisky to their people as some of the bucks had returned very quarrelsome and caused trouble.

We promised that no more liquor would be sold and they departed satisfied.

Early the following morning Hubbard returned to get more whisky. We refused to sell him any, telling him the promise we had made to the chief, but we told him that he could drink all he wanted free of cost while in our camp.

After this he helped himself, but never got drunk.

As Sayles and I were away from camp during daylight prospecting for gold, we decided to cache the liquor out in the woods in a safe place. Hubbard helped us to bury it.

From this time on Hubbard virtually lived at our camp, leaving his partner Schell in Chieke, and always had supper cooked for us when we returned at night. We brought in all kinds of mineralized rock, which we gravely tested with acids to see if it contained gold. Both Sayles and I had taken lessons in assaying and were therefore well posted in the treatment of minerals.

One day, when Sayles and I were testing rocks for gold with nitric acid, Hubbard, who was watching, asked us the best way to

reduce chlorination gold into the pure metal. We told him that it required special treatment in a furnace, as it was hard to melt.

Not a word had ever been said by Hubbard, Sayles, or myself about the robbery at the Treadwell mill. Now that Hubbard had asked this question, however, Sayles and I felt confident that he and Schell were so that the Indians would not see us going to the place where it was concealed.

After supper Hubbard and I started off in the small canoe. The water was smooth as glass and not a breath of wind was stirring.

After paddling about five miles we came to a heavily-timbered point three miles across the bay from Chieke village. Here the canoe

The Author (on left of picture) and his companion in the man-hunt, W. B. Sayles.

the thieves, and that they had the chloride of gold cached somewhere near Chieke.

Nothing more was said on the subject, however, for several days. Then, one evening, Hubbard returned from a visit to Schell in Chieke. He found Sayles and me busy testing for gold.

"Say, boys," he said presently. "Schell and I have got ten thousand dollars' worth of chlorination gold buried. If you will run it into gold bars for us, and keep the matter a secret, we will give you four hundred dollars."

We promptly accepted the offer, asking no questions, and I told him that it would be necessary for me to make a trip to Juneau to purchase acids, crucibles, and material to build a small furnace. For that reason, I added, he would have to convince me that he actually possessed the gold. Hubbard replied that he would prove his statement that very night, as soon as it became dusk, was hauled up and we walked out into the timber.

At the foot of a large spruce tree Hubbard raked away a pile of rubbish and brush and showed me proof of the existence of the chlorination gold. He exhibited a frying pan heavily coated with gold, there being about two hundred dollars' worth of the precious metal sticking to the inside of the pan.

A home-made bellows, made out of a cracker-box and an old rain-coat, was also dug up. This, Hubbard said, had been used by him and Schell in melting the gold, using dry bark for the fire. They were never able to pour the metal into a mould, he explained; it cooled off and stuck to the pan the moment it was taken from the fire. He also showed me where the balance of the gold was buried. He called it "black mud," which it much resembled.

I expressed myself satisfied, the frying

pan and bellows were re-buried, and we departed for camp.

On the way home, primed with whisky, Hubbard confided to me the secret of the Treadwell robbery. The facts are somewhat as follows :—

Schell and Hubbard worked on the night shift in the chlorination plant, " batching " in a cabin in Douglas City, half a mile from the mill. Two days before the robbery Hiram Schell pretended to be ill and sent word to the foreman to put a man on in his place.

Schell, while ostensibly ill, put in his time making two canvas bags to fit over his head and shoulders, one sack in front and one behind.

On the night selected for the robbery the day-shift, before going off duty, had drained the chloride solution from one of the wooden tanks so that the settlings at the bottom would be dry by morning. Each tank contained ten thousand dollars' worth of gold.

It was the habit of the night men to eat their midnight meal in the main part of the plant, which left the tank-room unguarded for one hour.

When the men vacated the tank-room Hubbard went with them.

Meanwhile Schell made his way through the Indian village to the chlorination plant in a blinding snow-storm, arriving at the rear door of the tank-room at midnight just after the men had left.

With a crowbar from the tool-house Schell pried open the door ; then he climbed into the tank from which the solution had been drained and filled his bags. He scraped the bottom of the tank thoroughly, so as to get all the precious " black mud."

Long before the time came for the men to return to work Schell was on his way back to the cabin, straining under the heavy load against his back and breast.

The snow was falling thick and fast, effectively covering up his footprints, and he wrapped his heavy overcoat round his back and shoulders to hide the sacks.

Arriving at his cabin, Schell proceeded to put the " black mud " into some old empty paint-kegs which had been collected for the purpose. Each small keg was filled with the " black mud," and then placed outside at each side of the door. They were soon completely covered with snow.

The sacks were burnt in the stove and the floor carefully swept to clean up any of the gold which might have fallen during the process of emptying the bags. Then Schell retired for the night to dream of his easily-earned wealth.

When Hubbard returned from the mill he got the shovel and cleared the board-walk outside the shack of the foot of snow which had fallen during the night. When he had finished, the snow was piled high on each side of the walk, completely covering the paint-kegs.

When the day-shift went to work the foreman promptly discovered that the rear door of the plant had been broken in and the tank cleaned of the gold. The alarm was given and by ten a.m. Douglas Island was swarming with law officers from Juneau and searchers from Douglas City.

Every house and shack on Douglas Island was immediately searched.

When the officers arrived at Hubbard's shack they found Hubbard asleep and Schell getting breakfast ready.

No trace of the missing gold could be found anywhere, and some days later Superintendent Duncan sent to Portland, Oregon, for three of the best detectives procurable.

These detectives, Hubbard said, had not been in Juneau and Douglas City more than a week before Schell and himself " tumbled " to their mission.

After the robbery Schell went back to work in the chlorination plant as before.

The detectives were finally sent home by Mr. Duncan as they failed to make any discoveries.

About the beginning of April the snow melted, exposing the paint-kegs, which had now fallen apart owing to the " black mud " freezing and bursting the hoops. It became necessary to seek a fresh method of concealment, and so a five-gallon oil-can that had been used as a water bucket, with a wooden handle across the top, was filled with the " mud," which came to within a few inches of the top of the can. A lot of bacon and tallow was then fried to a crisp and the whole poured on top of the gold, filling the can full with what Hubbard and Schell called their " *hooch-in-oo* grease." This can was set behind the cook-stove in plain view. It was no uncommon sight to see " *hooch-in-oo* grease " in Indian shacks, as the natives save up the fat from fish and fried bacon for winter use when the system requires plenty of grease.

On one occasion the town marshal on his rounds visited Hubbard and Schell. " You boys have got a good supply of ' *hooch-in-oo* grease ' on hand," he remarked.

During the month of April Hubbard and Schell bought the little schooner and then, saying they were going prospecting, they gave up their jobs in the chlorination works.

One morning, when the tide was high, the schooner was tied up on the water front a few hundred yards from their cabin and preparations made for moving. Their bedding and grub were carried down to the beach ; then they both took hold of the handle on the oil can and carried the precious " *hooch-in-oo* grease " down to the boat.

Without telling anyone of their destination, Hubbard and Schell left Juneau in the night for Chieke to visit an old friend there. Later, they made one trip back to Juneau after supplies, being careful not to be seen

by any of their associates on Douglas Island. Since then they had been awaiting a chance to turn the "black mud" into pure gold and dispose of it in a safe quarter.

Day was just breaking when Hubbard and I arrived back in camp. Tired out with our trip we were soon sound asleep. I don't know about Hubbard, but my dreams had a golden lining, for I could see success ahead when the stolen gold was turned over to its rightful owners.

After dinner next day the three of us selected a spot in a heavy grove of timber on a high knoll about two hundred yards from camp, to build the furnace for melting the gold. Then we began a search for suitable cedar trees to provide a supply of charcoal to be used in keeping the furnace hot.

At the head of a gulch about a quarter of a mile from camp a site for the charcoal kiln was chosen. It was arranged that Sayles and Hubbard were to burn the charcoal during my absence in Juneau, where I was to purchase materials for the furnace and the melting of the gold. The next morning I hired an Indian, who had visited our camp in search of whisky, to take me to Killisnoo, a distance of twenty-three miles, in his canoe. At Killisnoo I put up for the night with the manager of the big fish-cannery there.

At noon next day I boarded the passenger steamship *Queen*, which was *en route* from Sitka to Tacoma.

In Juneau I left the *Queen* and took a launch for Douglas Island, there to meet Superintendent Duncan and his assistant, Mr. Corbus. They were greatly pleased at the prospect of getting back the stolen gold.

Mr. Duncan agreed to provide a supply of acids, crucibles, and fireclay for building a small furnace and have it left at my hotel in Juneau, so that I could return to Killisnoo on the *Topeka* in a few days. He also agreed to send Deputy United States Marshal Charles Collins to Killisnoo in the course of a week. The marshal, until called for by me, was to remain on board a U.S. battleship which was spending the summer there.

It was thought best to have a United States officer to help us in the arrest of Hubbard and Schell for fear that some of their Indian friends might make trouble.

Everything being arranged, I returned to Killisnoo on the *Topeka*, and in due course arrived back at our camp.

It was dusk when I got there, and I found Sayles cooking supper by a blazing fire. Hubbard, sitting on a log near the fire, seemed sullen, and Sayles' expression convinced me that there was something wrong.

While I was washing my face Sayles stepped into the tent, where he scribbled a note on a scrap of paper.

"*The deal is all off,*" it read. "*Hubbard says he and Schell have decided not to have the gold melted.*"

When I returned to the fire I pretended not to notice Hubbard's sulkiness, and after we had eaten supper I asked him if they had finished burning the charcoal.

"No," he replied. "We let the fire go out the day after you left."

As though surprised, I asked the reason.

"Let's take a walk, Lee," he said. "I want to talk to you."

We started off in the hazy twilight, neither of us speaking until after we had reached the charcoal kiln. Then we sat down on a log.

"Lee," he told me, "Schell and I have decided not to treat that 'black mud' now. We will wait till some future time."

I asked him his reason, whereupon he burst out:—

"That partner of yours is a policeman, Lee, and we are afraid to dig up the stuff."

"What do you mean by a policeman?" I demanded.

"He's a fly cop—a detective," he growled.

It was time to put up a big bluff, and so I said: "If that's true, Charlie, I sha'n't sleep until he is anchored to the bottom of the bay, for he knows enough about me to send me to prison for the balance of my life. Have you got good grounds for your suspicions?"

"No," replied Hubbard. "But he looks and acts like a policeman. He has travelled over the world too much."

At that I laughed outright, telling Hubbard my mind was relieved, as I felt sure he was mistaken in his suspicions of Sayles. All I knew about him, I added, was what a boyhood friend in Juneau had told me. He had assured me that Sayles could be trusted with my life, as he had seen him tested when they were in the smuggling business on the Canada–Montana line a few years previously. He had informed me that Sayles had travelled all over the world as his parents were well-to-do, but that they had cut off his allowance and he then took to smuggling.

"Now, Charlie," I concluded, "if you still feel that you are taking a risk, just call the deal off. Of course, it's rather hard on me because I spent quite a little money for the material to melt the gold."

Hubbard thought for a moment; then he shook my hand.

"Lee, I have never doubted you for a moment," he said. "We will let the deal go on; but I will only bring in a quarter of the 'black mud' at a time. When this is melted you can take your hundred dollars' worth of it and I will bury the balance. Then, if your partner turns out to be a policeman after all, we sha'n't lose all the gold."

I told Hubbard that this would be satisfactory to me, and we then strolled back towards camp. When within a couple

of hundred yards I called to Sayles telling him to bring some fire on the shovel so that the charcoal kiln could be started again.

Next day we began work on the furnace, which we finished in three days. We estimated that it would need several days to dry before a fire could be built in it.

The night the furnace was finished I pretended to be ill with cramp in the stomach. The next morning I decided to go to Killisnoo and get some medicine, and made a start in our canoe just after breakfast.

Arriving in Killisnoo I went out to the battleship anchored in the harbour to meet Deputy United States Marshal Charlie Collins and make plans for the arrest of Schell and Hubbard. I told Mr. Collins to be camped on the beach at the head of Hood's Bay, on a certain day, and to remain there until I came across the mountain to pilot him back to camp.

The distance from the head of Chieke Bay to the head of Hood's Bay was given on our chart as five miles, and I figured I could walk that distance in a couple of hours when matters were ripe for the arrest.

Returning to camp late one evening with a supply of medicine I told Sayles and Hubbard that, as the furnace was dry, we could start melting the gold.

The next day Hubbard left in his small canoe for Chieke to get Schell and dig up a fourth of the "black mud." He said they would have to wait till late at night to cross Chieke Bay and dig up the gold so that the Indians would not see them.

While we were eating supper Hubbard returned with the consignment of "black mud." On examination Sayles and I concluded that it was well named, for it looked exactly like mud, but was very heavy.

The following day we got the furnace going and did a lot of experimenting so as to kill time. By night we had melted one batch of pure gold nuggets.

This was the day on which Marshal Collins was to start for the head of Hood's Bay.

Early next morning the large crucibles were filled with "black mud" and put into the red-hot furnace, which had a small bellows attached to it.

Sayles and I had no settled plan of action. It was left for me to decide when the time was ripe to act. The main point was not to let Hubbard secrete the gold that had been melted.

If it became necessary for quick action I decided to seize Hubbard, tie him up and hold him until Collins could be brought over to help in the arrest of Schell.

The following day we were busy at work melting the "black mud" and running it into pure gold nuggets. At four p.m. we weighed the nuggets. They amounted to nearly two thousand dollars' worth.

Just before supper was ready that night I walked out to the furnace and found the other two filling up the crucibles with a fresh batch of "mud." There was only one more lot left to be melted.

I told Hubbard and Sayles to hurry up and then returned to camp. Securing Hubbard's Winchester rifle, which lay at the head of our bed, I looked round for a place to hide it. There was a water-hole about ten feet deep near the camp, and into this I dropped it. There, no doubt, it still sleeps in peace.

My own rifle I hid so that I could get it without going into the tent; my pistol was stuck under the waistband of my pants, concealed by a light coat. Sayles's pistol and rifle were under the head of his bed.

It being now about time for the "mud" in the furnace to be melted, I began calling to the boys to come to supper. As they didn't come, I hurried out and found they were putting the last of the "mud" into the crucibles.

I pretended to be angry and remarked that my nice supper was getting cold. Hubbard began explaining that he would rather finish the work than eat supper, but I told him there would be another day to-morrow to finish the job. With that I grabbed the can containing the nuggets, telling Hubbard to bring the already-filled crucibles and we would cache them in a safe place. I then started off through the heavy timber, he following with the crucibles.

When out of sight of Sayles we buried the gold by the side of a log.

Soon after the meal I began to complain of cramp in my stomach, and took a dose of medicine to relieve the pain.

About 10.30 p.m., when I thought Hubbard was asleep, I carefully slipped on my boots to go outside. Hubbard sat up and asked where I was going. I replied that I was going to make a hot toddy to see if it would relieve the pain in my stomach.

A fire was built and water put on to heat. The toddy was made; then I went back to bed, lying down with my boots on.

In the course of an hour Hubbard was snoring, and I decided he was sound asleep. I got up, made another toddy to make sure that Hubbard was really asleep, and then, reaching under the tent near Sayles's head, I secured my Winchester rifle. The pistol and bowie knife I had buckled round my waist.

I then went down to the furnace, dug up the gold nuggets and "black mud," and started north. After going a quarter of a mile I cached the gold in a pile of rocks. Then I continued up an open glade towards the north-east, heading for Hood's Bay and Marshal Collins.

Making quick time, I reached the appointed spot and found him and the two Indians who had brought him there asleep in a tent.

"Hubbard leapt to his feet, whereupon Collins levelled his pistol at his breast."

While Collins was dressing I made a pot of coffee. Day was just breaking.

The marshal sent the Indians back to Killisnoo with the camp outfit; then he and I returned on foot over the route by which I had come. We stopped to dig up the gold which I had cached and took it along with us to save coming back for it.

On reaching the top of a timbered hill overlooking our camp, we saw Sayles cooking breakfast and Hubbard sitting by the fire.

Making our way down the hill-side we reached the tent which lay between us and the camp fire.

Before stepping round the cover, I cautioned Collins not to shoot Hubbard if he resisted arrest as I had thrown the only gun he had into a deep water-hole.

When he appeared round the tent Hubbard leapt to his feet, whereupon Collins levelled his pistol at his breast and told him to throw up his hands. He paid no attention to Collins but walked up to where I stood waiting, leaning on my rifle. Straightening himself up to his full height he looked me square in the face and demanded angrily:—

"Davis, how can you ever face the public again after the way you have treated me?"

I told him my conscience would not bother me, for it was my duty to protect society from law-breakers.

The marshal then started to place handcuffs on Hubbard, but I talked him out of the notion, saying that I would be responsible for his good behaviour, as I knew he was a good man at heart and would not take advantage of fair treatment.

Sayles was relieved of a heavy strain by our arrival, as Hubbard had suspected foul play directly he found me absent and the gold missing.

After breakfast the tent was taken down and everything was put aboard the two canoes. The furnace was not disturbed.

It was nearly noon when we started for the Indian village of Chieke. There we found the *Lucy*, a small steam launch, anchored near the shore. Collins had arranged with the captain to be in Chieke that day.

Hubbard was put aboard the *Lucy*, and an unwelcome surprise was sprung on the unsuspecting Hiram Schell when he was arrested, handcuffed, and taken on board the *Lucy* to join his accomplice.

We arrived in Juneau the next evening, after travelling all night, and here Schell was lodged in jail, while Hubbard was allowed to stay with me night and day, free from handcuffs. He had given me his word of honour that he would not attempt to escape.

My object in showing favours to Hubbard was to induce him to make a written confession concerning the theft, thereby saving himself a long term in the penitentiary. This would also allow Sayles and me to return to Denver immediately, as our evidence would not be needed when the court assembled late in the fall.

For two weeks Hubbard refused to make a written confession, saying that he hated to testify against Schell; but finally he was persuaded that this was the best thing to do. The confession was acknowledged before a notary public; then I turned Hubbard over to the jailer, who promised to treat him well.

Superintendent Duncan was very happy over the return of the stolen gold. The balance of the "black mud," with the gold-lined frying pan, was dug up across the bay from Chieke. The cracker-box bellows, made by Hubbard and Schell, was also taken along to be used as evidence in court.

The two newspapers of Juneau came out with columns of matter about the great detective abilities of "W. Boxwell Sayles" and "Lee R. Davis." I had never divulged my right name to the public.

Finally, in the latter part of August, Sayles and I went to the jail to bid Hubbard good-bye. He promised that he would stick to his confession, and so save us a trip back to Juneau to testify in court.

Late in the fall Mr. Duncan wrote to me in Denver that our presence in the Juneau court was not required, as Hubbard had stuck to his written confession and testified against Schell, who was sentenced to three years in a United States prison. Hubbard himself had received a sentence of one year in the United States jail in Sitka, the territorial capital.

Hubbard and I kept up a friendly correspondence until he was liberated. He wrote that only on steamer days—once a week—did the United States marshal have him locked up; at other times he was free to go and come as he pleased.

The last letter I received from Hubbard was when he was a free man *en route* to Lake Bennett, British Columbia, whence he wrote that he would, in company with two other men, drift down the Yukon River on a raft to Dawson City, there to seek a fortune in that booming gold country.

Some years later, I met a man who knew Hubbard in Dawson City. He reported that he had made money on the Yukon River and was now living a retired life in Tacoma, Washington.

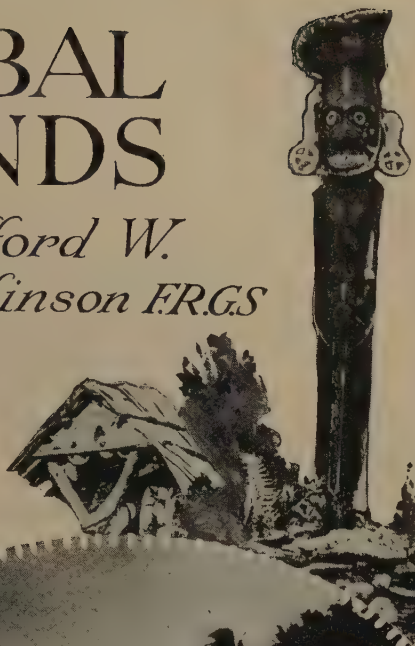
This news pleased me, as I considered Charlie Hubbard a man of honour; a love of liquor was the cause of his downfall.

The last account I had of Hiram Schell he had served his time in prison and become an outlaw in Alaska. According to newspaper accounts, after killing officers of the law, he was surrounded by a large posse in the mountains behind Juneau, with no possible chance of escape. That was the last I heard of him; no doubt he was either killed or captured.

The CANNIBAL ISLANDS

by Clifford W. Collinson F.R.G.S

A series of articles which our readers will find particularly interesting. Mr. Collinson has spent several years in the Solomons, a strikingly beautiful group where, in the unexplored interior of the larger islands, cannibalism and head-hunting are still practised and many tribes have never set eyes on a white man. In this instalment Mr. Collinson describes his first impressions on reaching the islands.



An awe-inspiring Solomon "devil-devil."

Sunset in the Solomons.

The entrance to a native "tambu" house. Women are forbidden to enter these buildings.

I.

IF I had not tried to improvise "You made me love you" on the piano of my hotel in Sydney one hot February morning, I do not suppose I should ever have gone to the Solomon Islands. As I was idly playing the air over to myself a man strolled into the room, and we got into conversation. I told him I had just arrived from Manila and intended making a trip amongst the South Sea Islands.

"Which group?" he asked.

"Well," I replied, "I really haven't decided. Can you advise me?"

"Come and stay awhile with me in the Solomon Islands," said my new friend. "I am sailing the day after to-morrow."

Things are done just like that overseas, and one very soon gets accustomed to these casual and rather startling invitations. Within an hour I had booked my passage. Thus a trifling incident, unremarked at the time, completely changed the course of my life.

Alone in my bedroom I turned up a map and located the Solomons, of the position of which, until that day, I had only a vague idea.

I learnt that my friend was a Government officer whose station was at the western end of the Solomon Group, and during the morning he took me to the particular hostelry patronised by the "Island" men, where I was introduced to several of my fellow-voyagers of the morrow. There is an extraordinary "family" atmosphere about "Island" men. Everyone knows everyone else, as is only natural when it is remembered that there is but one small two-thousand-ton steamer serving the Solomon Islands, making it inevitable that in their journeyings to and from Sydney they all meet at one time or another.

At eleven o'clock next morning the S.S. *Mindini* pulled out from the wharf, slid gingerly through the pylons of the swing bridge, and steamed down the harbour. As we passed through the Heads we met the long rollers of the Pacific and, swinging northwards, settled down to our fifteen-hundred-mile run towards the Equator and the Solomon Islands.

The British Solomons, I should explain, cover an area some five hundred miles in length, and include seven or eight large mountainous islands varying in length from seventy to a hundred miles and in breadth from twenty to thirty, as well as innumerable smaller islands ranging from fifteen to twenty miles in length to the tiny coral islet only thirty or forty yards across. Some of the mountains on the larger islands attain a height of from seven to ten thousand feet, and most of them are of volcanic origin. There are no active volcanoes in the British portion of the group, though in Bougainville (lately German, now Australian) Mount Bagana is in a constant state of eruption. Many of the islands, however, show signs of latent volcanic activity, and I have myself found boiling springs, crystallized sulphur deposits, steam vents and pits of boiling mud in the hitherto unexplored interior of the large island of Vella Lavella.

My first glimpse of the Solomon Islands was at dawn on the ninth day out from Sydney—the verdure-clad peaks of the island of Guadalcanar. Of all the islands of the Pacific I think the Solomons are the most tantalizing and unsettling to those of an adventurous spirit. Here the white man is a shore-dweller, his plantations and settlements on the larger islands merely fringing the beaches. Inland there lie mountain masses never yet explored, the home of fierce and treacherous bush natives, to venture amongst whom is to court disaster. Day after day one skirts the shores of these mountainous islands, their peaks wrapped in the clouds. Now and then, in the primeval jungle covering their flanks, one sees columns of drifting blue smoke that betray the presence of dark-skinned people who have probably never yet beheld a white man.

The long list of murders, extending from Lieut. Bower and his boat's crew in 1880, down to the death of two white recruiters on Malaita only a few years ago, proves that the savage and treacherous instincts of the people are still to be reckoned with. Capt. C. H. Simpson, of H.M.S. *Blanche*, in his report to the Admiralty, described the Solomon Islanders as being "the most treacherous and bloodthirsty of any known savages," and many were the hair-raising stories told me by my fellow-voyagers—all "Island" men—as the *Mindini* thumped her way northwards through the Coral Sea from Sydney.

You can imagine with what interest I scanned the Islands as we rounded Cape Esperanzo and turned eastwards towards Florida Islands, where lay Tulagi, our first port of call and the seat of government for the whole of the group. The sun was setting in a blaze of orange and gold and, as we rounded the last point, the island palms were silhouetted pitch-black against the glorious colours of the western skies. The sun sank out of sight below the horizon, the sky darkened swiftly, and, as the anchor chain rumbled down, lights twinkled from the dimly-seen shores and sent quivering golden serpents across the water. The light of the electric flare hanging over the accommodation ladder fell in a golden glow on the white ducks and tanned features of the passengers as they clustered at the rail to greet the little doctor as he came aboard. When the ship had been given a clean bill of health there was an immediate rush of white-clad figures up the ladder followed by cheery greetings and an eager interchange of news. It was five months since the steamer had left the Islands—a very unusual length of time—the long interval being due to an engineering strike in Australia which had held the vessel up at Sydney.

All my attention was given to the native police, who also came aboard, six brawny fellows, coffee-brown and muscular, with great mops of fuzzy hair, clad in short *lava-lavas* (waist-cloths). Familiarity breeds contempt, it is said, in any case it breeds

One of the palm-fringed island beaches.

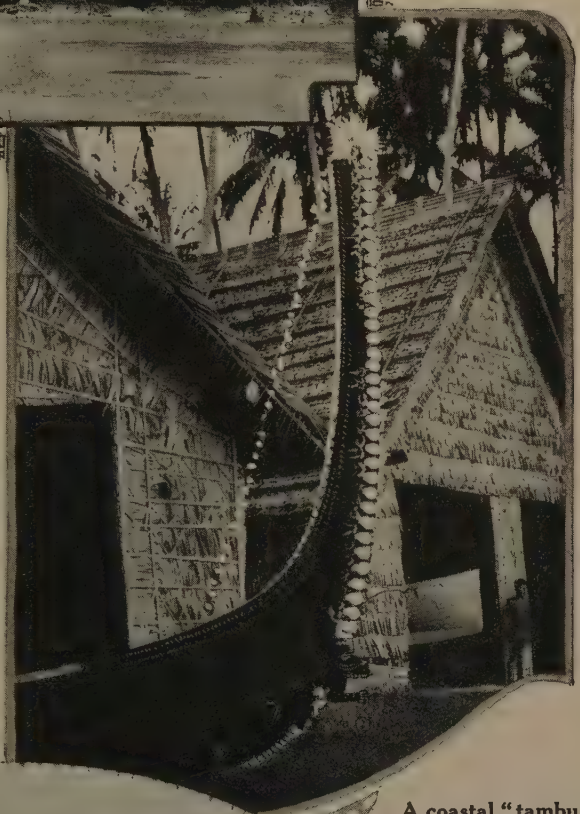
indifference, and nowadays, of course, such scenes have become part of my daily life, but I shall never forget the deep impression made upon me by my first introduction to the islands of the Pacific.

Around us twinkled the riding lights of the schooners, whose owners had gathered from all the surrounding islands to meet the Sydney steamer. Now, at the foot of the accommodation ladder, there was a crowd of dinghies jostling and rocking together in packed confusion, with their naked black crews jabbering excitedly in a perfect Babel of sound.

I can remember how, later on,

Tulagi Harbour.

as I leaned over the rail, a voice shouted: "Anyone for the shore?" and grasping the opportunity, I cried out "Yes." I ran down the ladder and clambered across a medley of bobbing skiffs and launches into a boat on the outskirts of the throng, and we were soon skimming the quiet waters, with the



A coastal "tambu" house and the decorated prow of a war-canoe.

moon shining on the naked bodies of the boys.

Arrived at the little wharf, with its Post Office brilliantly lighted

and the active form of Mr. Jackson, the Postmaster, visible inside as he swiftly sorted the accumulated mail of three months, we turned to the left along a well-made path, bordered on one side by a hill covered with coconut palms and on the other by the softly shimmering bay. Starkly outlined against the stars was the intricate tracery of the palm leaves—motionless in the breathless night — while all around sounded the shrilling of the crickets.

European quarters in places like the Solomons are all very much alike, and I shall not describe these in any detail. There are the usual trading stores, where one may purchase such goods as are used for dealing with the natives and also goods of another class, such as one may need for personal use. The native boys are simply clad in a short *lava* or skirt of coloured cotton. Many have their hair bleached to a light chocolate brown with lime, and one or two I saw had lime plastered all over their heads, the hair being in process of bleaching.

The following morning we were up early to find the steamer moving over to Makambo, the wharf and trade depôt at the other side of the bay. After breakfast we went ashore to the depôt. The path leading to the store was bordered with flowering crotons and mummy apple trees, a smallish palm-like tree with a thick cluster of pear-shaped brown fruit bunched round its head. Bushes of scarlet hibiscus, with here and there a tree of brilliant purple bougainvillia, and everywhere the graceful coconut palm, completed a typical South Sea Island picture.

Later, having crossed the harbour, we walked along the shore to the Chinatown settlement. The "Chinks," I found, were unpopular among Europeans because they sold "trade" more cheaply and allowed the natives to squat and smoke and spit in their stores, thus undermining the strict discipline of the British authorities. In order to keep them in bounds the Government confined their grant of land to a small bog on the coast, but the resourceful Chinese have drained the swamp, filled it in, and built several fine stores and houses there. The question of admitting further Chinese is at present agitating the authorities, and it is hoped that some form of restriction will be imposed on future immigration.

I was in search of a Chinese tailor to shorten some gabardine trousers I had bought at the store, and on inquiring where the tailor was to be found we were told by a native that it was "backside new fellow house." The conversation with the tailor proceeded as follows :—

"Place belong makee suit ?"

"Yes."

(Trousers produced from parcel.)

"Long fellow too much. Makee more short. You savvy makum ?"

"Yes ; me savvy."

"How much ?"

"Two shilling."

"What name ?"

"Two shilling."

"All right."

This is a sample of the way in which the natives converse with the Europeans and also with those who live in different parts of the Islands. There are almost as many languages as there are islands, and it is by no means infrequent for natives living only twenty miles away in the same island not to be able to understand one another. Nobody except the Government officials and the missionaries ever troubles to learn the native dialects. They all talk a sort of "pidgin English," and the white trader relies upon that alone for his intercourse with the tribesmen.

There are some very quaint forms of expression used in this "pidgin" dialect. A boy in my employment, for instance, wanted a saw one day, but did not know what its British name was. He had, however, observed the article in use and he came to me with :—

"Master, me want him this fellow pull-him-he-come push-him-he-go — all-a-same ackis." "Ackis" is the native manner of pronouncing axe. Few Solomon Islanders can pronounce the English "ks" ; they always make two syllables of it. Thus "six" becomes "sickis" and so with other like sounds. "Kai-kai" (pronounced to rhyme with sky) is the native word for "to eat," and not long ago a native came limping into my veranda and I said :—

"What name ? Something he kai-kai finger belong boot belong you ? Me look him !"

Translated this means :—"What's the matter ? Has something bitten your toe ? Let me see it."

"Finger belong boot" seems rather a roundabout way of describing a toe, but it is easily understandable.

My native who came for a saw could scarcely have found a better description for the article. The word "bullamacow" signifies any kind of meat, tinned or fresh, as well as bulls and cows, while a hen or a cockerel is a "cockerako"—a word which is distinctively suggestive of a hen's announcement of her egg-laying achievement.

If I desired a house-boy to bring my boots from the dining-room in which they were lying I should remark : "You savvy this two-fellow boot belong me—he stop along room belong kai-kai. Bring-him-he-come !" "Take-him-he-go" naturally means the opposite of "bring-him-he-come." If you want to threaten a boy with punishment if he should forget something you warn him : "My word ! Suppose you lose him something, I kill you." This is not quite so bloodthirsty as it sounds ; it only means

Traders' stores at Tulagi.

An island dance.

that you will do something unpleasant to him. If one really meant "to kill" one would say: "Kill him die finish," which, to be sure, is sufficiently descriptive.

Indeed, it is no easy matter for a white man to learn any of the native languages owing to what one may call their "fluid" character. The islanders clip their words short, delete half a word, and substitute and interpose syllables which are quite meaningless. For instance, the Vella Lavella word for "I" is "aña" (ang-a) and that for "go" is "zheo," so that one would naturally conclude

Chinatown, Tulagi.

that "ana zheo" means "I go." But no! When a native wishes to say "I go," he says: "Ana *ta* zheo," and when asked where the "ta" comes from and what it signifies he only grins and says: "Oh! he stop! He all right!"

Under the burning sun while I was at Tulagi it was pleasant to spend a day on the water, watching the fish swimming round the ship. The denizens of the sea were visible to a great depth in the crystal clear water. There were "Long Toms"—thin, pike-like creatures a couple of feet in length—flat bream-like fish, millions of a sort of tiny whitebait sweeping through the water like silver clouds, a red fish thick at the head and tapering towards the tail and weighing about seven or eight pounds each, and several large flat fish called *trevalli*, which weigh anywhere from twenty to thirty pounds. Last, but not least, were the sharks (small ones for the most part) four or five feet long.

On shore there were other things to study. As I walked along the path bordering the sea I noticed how pitted it was with the small, deep, circular holes of land crabs, the beach itself being alive with small specimens. Lizards darted across the path—little creatures about six inches in length. In the bush there were the cockatoos—perky, squeaking little birds—which are very numerous about these islands and a familiar sight flying among the coconut palms. I also saw a school of fish flickering in and out of the water, and over them hovered a score or two of belamas or frigate birds, swooping now and then to pick up a fish.

While the diet of the Europeans comprises a considerable proportion of meat, that of the natives is essentially vegetable, though it is in some parts still interspersed with meals off their fellow-humans. This, however, is naturally not a regular article of food. Yams, sweet potatoes, small taro and large taro, sago, coconuts, plantains, and in some parts sugar cane—these are the staple foods. Mingled with them are various fruits, such as pawpaw, limes, mango, and *nali* nuts. These latter are, in my opinion, far superior in flavour to the almond, and they are very similar in appearance. These nuts are a favourite article of diet with the natives. They store them away in large quantities during the season of their fruition. I appreciated them so much myself that I have brought a quantity of them to England and am having them analysed to ascertain their oil-bearing properties.

The power of mental suggestion is very strong amongst the natives, and hence the sorcerer has immense power over them. Many instances were related to me, occurring within the knowledge of my informants, of sorcerers "ill-wishing" a man, and almost invariably that person died as the result.

I was once asked by the District Officer to bring back with me from a far-away village which I was visiting in my launch two brothers who had murdered a sorcerer. This individual had borrowed money from the third brother of these men and, being importuned by him for repayment, the sorcerer had faked up some fancied excuse and "willed" him to die. The man had succumbed—and in the Solomons death cancels all debts. The two brothers strongly disapproved of the sorcerer's method of liquidating his financial obligations and, lying in wait for him one moonlight night, they struck the sorcerer and a balance at the same time.

The two men were considerably surprised when I ordered them to accompany me to the "Government" on a charge of murder, but though I was alone, they knew it would be useless to resist, as they would ultimately be captured even if they fled into the bush, so they came aboard and I duly handed them over to "Government." During the fortnight I had them on board they helped me with the sailing of the vessel and took their turn of work with the crew. I think they got two years' imprisonment each, but, seeing they were upstanding lads I have no doubt they were very soon promoted to be Government boat-boys at Tulagi and, grown sleek with good food and sanitary conditions, they would not be at all unhappy.

On the question of the cancellation of debts by death, I may say that this law among the natives makes it extremely difficult for the trustees of deceased traders in the islands to collect bad debts. The position is so hopeless that a cash basis is the only sound method of settling trading accounts.

History among the Solomons natives is practically non-existent. No native keeps a record of anything that occurs or even of the lapse of time. They do not even know their own ages. Their timepiece is the sun, and being so near the equator, that orb rises and sets approximately at six in the morning and six in the evening respectively all the year round. When one's shadow is clustered in a blot about one's feet it is noonday.

Twenty years ago the natives throughout the group indulged in cannibalism and head hunting, but nowadays these amiable customs are confined almost entirely to the island of Malaita. It is an astonishing fact, however, that the inhabitants of that island are the best workers in the whole group, and are almost universally recruited by the traders for work on the coconut plantations. Slavery also used to exist, but is now much less prevalent. In the old days a cannibal feast frequently attended the completion of a new *tambu* house, and the victim was usually selected from among those who had been originally purchased into slavery by the chief.

The *tambu* house in the Solomon Islands

Men of the Solomons.

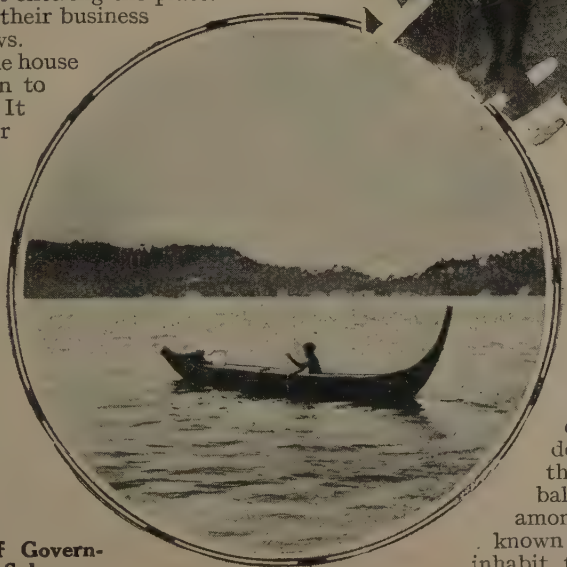
is a building on which all manner of skill is brought to bear. It is a sacred erection which women are forbidden to enter. In the coastal villages the *tambu* house is used chiefly for housing war canoes. In this building, in the villages of the interior, there are frequently deposited wooden figures of sharks in which are enclosed the skulls of ordinary men and the entire bodies of the chiefs.

The front portion of a *tambu* house is the general rendezvous or club for the men of the village, and strangers direct their steps towards it on first entering the place. There they state their business and learn the news.

The inside of the house is free to all men to lie and sleep in. It is very rare for bloodshed to take place within its walls, and for this reason it may be regarded as something akin to the Jewish sanctuary.

In these days of missionaries and traders it is exceedingly difficult to obtain ocular evidence of cannibalism, as the natives appear to realize that the white man is unaccountably averse to such customs. I have myself, however, talked to scores of toothless old chiefs who made no secret of the fact that they had enjoyed many a toothsome morsel of "long pig" in the not-very-far-distant past. In fact, I know one wily old scamp about whose cannibal proclivities even at the present day I have my doubts. It is nevertheless true that cannibalism is still practised amongst the almost unknown bush tribes that inhabit the interior of the

Solomon Island girls.



Tulagi, the seat of Government in the British Solomons.

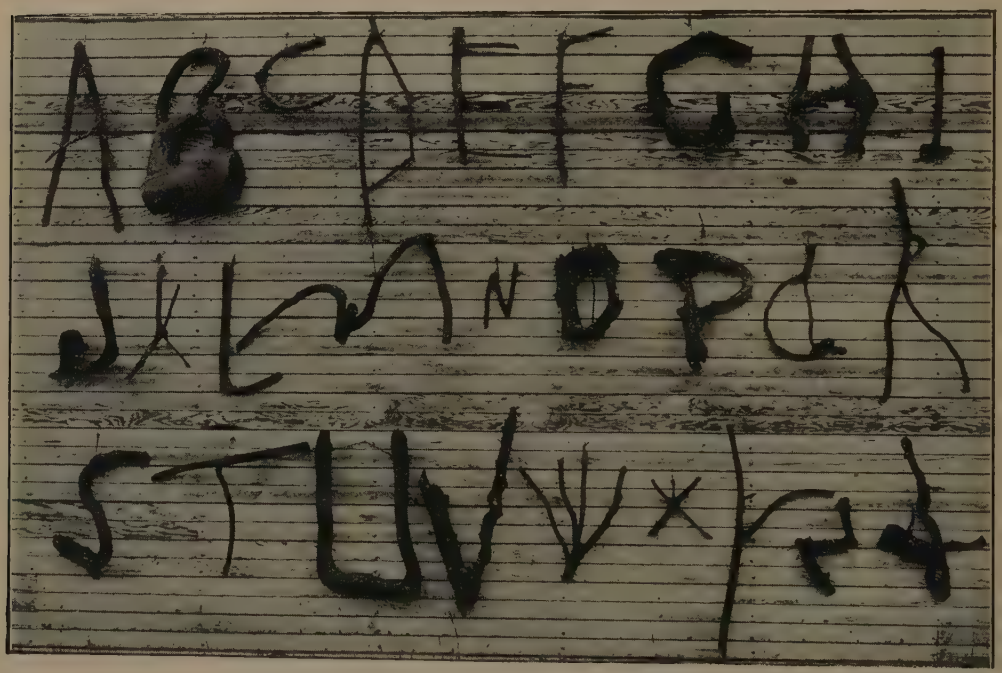
larger islands such as Choiseul, Guadalcanar, and Malaita.

In my own explorations into the interior of these islands I have come across ancient devil-devil houses whose decorations include human skulls with the marks of tomahawk gashes plainly to be seen.

The practice of head-hunting used to prevail over the whole group and still does so to a certain extent. The most famous head-hunters belong to the island of New Georgia, and their forays used to extend over an area of a hundred miles in every direction.

More often than not these head-hunting expeditions were unconnected with cannibalism, the mere possession of the skulls being the principal object of the expedition. On the island of Malaita, I fear, there are a good many white skulls gracing the portals of *tambu* houses in the interior, such a trophy being deemed the *chef d' œuvre* of a chief's collection. Even a white man will, at times, succumb to the temptation to become a head-hunter, and the story of how I, myself, collected a head will be told in a later article.

(*To be continued.*)



A NATURAL ALPHABET.

THE photograph here reproduced was sent to us by a reader in Patterson, California. He writes: "Enclosed please find an actual photograph of my natural alphabet, the letters being found one by one in the forests of California. I was fifteen years getting the complete collection. Every letter was grown naturally, without any training; they are just 'freaks of Nature,' and required a lot of time, patience, and travel to discover. After examining the photograph you will wonder how the letters 'B,' 'G,' 'H,' and several others could possibly have grown naturally from the limb of a tree, but they *have* done so, and are certainly remarkable curiosities, worthy of a place in a museum. The letters are at present at my home in Patterson, Stanislaus County, California." Our correspondent sends an affidavit by a friend, testifying that these natural letters are all strictly genuine and not "faked" in any way.

Three Asses in the Pyrenees

A JOYOUS JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE.

Recently returned from a big game expedition to Central Africa, utterly bored with the "everything-supplied-by-the-stores" atmosphere that surrounds the modern traveller, the Author yearned to test his wife's theory that romance and adventure still linger in the by-ways of old Europe for those who seek them diligently. Her idea was to go on tramp with a donkey-cart, camping out at night, and avoiding all such latter-day luxuries as hotels, trains, and motor-cars. Finally Mr. Walmsley came to us, and we commissioned him, with his wife and the donkey, to wander through the Pyrenees, writing up his experiences exclusively for THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE.

By Leo Walmsley
M.C., F.R.G.S

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

VIII.—(*Conclusion.*)

THROUGHOUT the night rain fell steadily, yet when I wakened at the first gleam of day the fire was still burning. I dressed and went out. The fog had lifted, but the valley below and the distant mountains were veiled in rain squalls and offered a dour, cheerless spectacle. It was cold, too, unspeakably cold. I stirred up the fire and set it blazing, and put a kettle of water on for coffee. Then I went to Blanchette.

Her lover, thank heaven, had gone—whither I knew not. She thrust her dewy muzzle under my arm with such a pathetic cough that I forgave her for her devilment, and fetched her a bucket of oats. The electric lamp which she had caused me to drop I found under a patch of trampled bracken. It did not look as though it would ever burn again, and I left it there along with my straw hat, which showed all-too-evident signs of the impact of a hoof.

I made breakfast. Billy awakened. We fed in the tent, listening to the beat of the rain on the roof, and watching the squalls scudding across the valley from peak to peak. One cannot live for any length of time as we had lived without acquiring a fair knowledge of the weather, and I knew there was little prospect of an improvement for many hours to come. Arrens was now eighteen kilometres away. We decided to make an immediate start.

There is something particularly dismal in the striking of a camp in rain; it is just like coming out of a hot bath and drying yourself with someone else's wet towel. However we did it, with Spartan smiles, harnessed Blanchette, and set off.

Once out of the shelter of the copse we began to get the full effect of the weather. The wind, trapped by the mountains, and thrown into wicked gusts, blew from all quarters, and the rain varied from sleet to driving hail. In half an hour what portions of our clothing had remained dry from the previous day's storm were wringing wet, and our faces were grey and pinched with cold.

For the first mile the road ran down through sparse woodland; then it wound close in to the precipitous sides of the Mt. du Laid, and became a narrow dizzy track not wide enough for two carriages to pass. In one place it led through a tunnel blasted out of the rock, and at many points not more than six inches lay between the offside wheel of the cart and a dead drop of a thousand feet into the Cirque, where patches of dirty, muddy ice still marked the track of winter glaciers. At the end of an hour, however, the road left the mountain side, and we found ourselves on a heath-clad tableland across which the wind-squalls

howled most desolately. A sorrowful picture we must have made travelling along that wilderness. Billy's straw hat was so sodden that it drooped like a wet flannel, and her hair hung from under it in black moist folds. Her shoes squelched at every step—we were walking to help Blanchette—and so did mine. Blanchette was so miserable that she wouldn't open her eyes, but kept her head close to the ground and smelt the way. I had no need to urge her; she realized as well as we did that in movement lay the one hope of salvation from discomfort.

We had travelled across about a quarter of this tableland when suddenly, dipping down to a gushing watercourse, we noticed a large touring car leaning sideways close up to the ditch. A man, clad in a great fur coat and a bowler hat, was walking up and down beside it beating his arms across his chest, and stamping fiercely on the ground.

We hurried on and presently he saw us. He had, in addition to the fur coat, an enormous beard and a very large nose which seemed to reach in one uninterrupted curve from the hat to the chin. His face was pale, but the great nose was blue with cold and mottled with red and purple.

The stranger looked desperately glad to see us.

"Monsieur," he began, in very bad and guttural French, "I am in great misfortune. My car, as you see, is secure in the mud. Like this I have been since last night. The whole night I have been here. You are tourists, yes? You have a little food, perhaps. *Mein Gott!* but I am famished. My wife is inside there."

He pointed to the car, whose hood was up. We halted alongside, and I caught the unmistakable sound of snoring. Glancing inside, I saw lying partly across the seat, partly on top of a pile of luggage, the unconscious figure of a lady of remarkable proportions. She seemed to fill the whole car. Her body was swathed in rugs and a sealskin coat, which heaved mountainously as she breathed. Her face was very large and moist, and her mouth was wide open.

One had not to look twice at either male or female to judge their nationality. They were Germans; and if one thing was wanting to confirm it, it was there when the male explained that he was a Swiss.

But the law of the road is the law of the sea where an S.O.S. is concerned. The man explained that their *chauffeur* had been taken ill farther back, and as they had booked rooms at Eaux-Bonnes, they had decided to come on without him. Some evilly-disposed *gendarme* had advised this road, describing it as a route *très belle, très facile.* (I wondered if that *gendarme* had served at the front.) All had gone well until the fog came down, and the car stuck in the mud-filled ditch. After that—well, there was only room in the car for one.

"Do not wake her!" he whispered hoarsely, as I gave him a roll of bread. "Wait!"

He ate the roll as only a German could; it was not to be expected that his good *frau* should sleep through the process. She woke with a start, took stock of the situation with her sky-blue eyes, and promptly burst into tears. We moved discreetly away, while her husband explained to her in German that we were English tourists, that we had plenty of food, and a donkey that would undoubtedly help to pull the car out.

"You will help us, will you not?" he added turning to me. "I will pay liberally for the food. You have more? I would buy what you have."

I told him stiffly that we had more, but that it was not for sale. I should be delighted, however, to give the lady a tin of sardines, a little bread, and what remained of the butter. There was also a piece of bacon fat and a mouldy Camembert cheese if he cared to have them. As for helping him with the car, I would give what assistance lay in my power. He was a most objectionable person, but I couldn't leave him stranded.

He ate the cheese, but not the fat, while I took stock of the car problem. The back wheels had got into a mud hole which had been made deeper and muddier by the German's desperate attempts to drive out without throwing something in to give the tyres a grip. I had known the same thing happen a dozen times a day in the East African rainy season, and I promptly put him on to cut armfuls of heather, which he set down near at hand. Then we persuaded the lady to get out of the car, and she stood there shielding her costly garments from the rain with a gold-mounted umbrella, while Fritz and I jacked up the back axle and put a good packing of heather into the hole.

Then I gave him careful instructions. I would take control, I said, and when I put the engine into gear, he was to stand immediately behind one wheel and push and lift with all his might. I was particularly careful to point out that he must stand immediately behind the wheel. That was most important if my plans were to be successful!

The car was American, and its mechanism quite familiar to me. I got in and started the engine

"Are you ready?" I bawled.

"*Yah!—oui, oui!*" he answered, bending down to his task, with his fat legs sprawled astride the hole.

"Look carefully at him, Billy," I said more softly. "Watch the pretty wheel."

Then I pushed in the gear and swiftly opened the throttle.

The car shuddered; there came a fearful whirr from behind, and then it leapt forward on to the clear road. I stopped it and jumped out. Oh, how successful my plan had been!

"If they talk like that in Switzerland, give me Billingsgate! Even his good wife was ashamed."

That whirring wheel, before it gripped the heather, had sent a glorious spray of liquid mud straight up Fritz's body, smothering him from his feet up to his beard, nose, and hat. I simply couldn't see him at all—but you could hear him!

Swiss? If they talk like that in Switzerland, give me Billingsgate! Even his good

wife was so ashamed that she turned her back on him and allowed the gold-mounted umbrella to be blown inside out. Billy, I am sorry to say, was laughing, but I apologized. One would never have thought, I told him, that the wheel would have behaved thus, but at any rate the car was out. I was very glad indeed that I had been of use to him, but I would rather he did not thank me. He did, for all that, and he offered me fifty francs as he climbed into the car and prepared to go.

But I did not take it; I hadn't the heart.

We went on with the lighter hearts that are the reward of those who have done a good turn, but the rain and the cold made them weighty again before we reached the edge of the tableland and looked down into the valley of the Arrens. Arrens itself lay almost directly at our feet, yet still a good six miles away as the road went. What a descent that was! I had to hold Blanchette's head the whole time for fear she stumbled, and so fierce were the wind-squalls at times that we had to huddle close to the bank-side to keep ourselves from being blown away.

But gradually the moors yielded to pastureland and trees and the blessed hedgerows of cultivated land, and the sound of church bells and human voices floated upwards and gave promise of inns and food—and, above all, beds and dry clothes.

It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the first level run of the road, and half-past when, utterly exhausted, we drove Blanchette into the yard of the Hotel de France, in Arrens. Had it not been for Billy, who exacts from me a very high standard of behaviour, I swear I would have kissed the hostess of that inn when, bustling out at the sound of our coming, she announced that *déjeuner* was still on the table, that her best bedroom was unoccupied, and that if we cared we might walk into the kitchen and warm ourselves at the fire of blazing logs.

Arrens is a picturesque little village, more Spanish than French in the style of its domestic architecture.

We stayed there at the Hotel de France for a couple of days, for Blanchette, in coming down the mountain, had got badly chafed by the harness and needed a rest. Really she had done splendidly. The villagers were incredulous when we told them she had brought us over the Col, and many were the offers of purchase that were made for her.

But now that we were rested the lure of the road came strong again and, the third morning breaking clear and fine, we harnessed up and set off once more:

"Hark! hark! the dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town."

The old nursery rhyme came back to me with a new and poignant significance one day a few weeks later.

We had visited Cauterêts, we had retraced our tracks to the Gave de Pau, climbed up to Luz, the Cirque de Gavarnie, and gone back again to Luz, all of them famous show places of the Hautes Pyrenees. We had tasted the waters of Bagnères de Bigorre, we had eaten horseflesh steak in one of its best hotels, and behold us now in the suburbs of Lourdes, clattering along a paved boulevard, with a pack of snarling, barking dogs behind us, in front of us, and all around us.

Behold also a long double line of open-air *cafés*, crowded with Frenchmen, all staring hard, and with manifest amusement.

I suppose we looked amusing. Our adventures during the last few weeks had left their mark upon us. The cart was spattered with mud, the harness—never elegant—was reinforced with string and rope, and where it had chafed our ass's skin I had fixed great pads of rag and cotton-wool which protruded most untidily. I had found it necessary also to ease the pain of the horsefly wounds by painting them with iodine, and the effect of the yellow stains on Blanchette's snow-white skin was not harmonious. Billy's hat had never recovered from its soaking. My own hair wanted cutting, and my clothes, worn threadbare in parts, were decorated with a variety of pigments—tea, coffee, sardine oil, condensed milk, iodine, and butter, a pound of which, to Billy's annoyance, I had recently sat upon.

"The beggars are coming to town."

The dogs were certainly barking hard enough, and the more I tried to whip them away the more clamorous did they become.

"What do you sell?" an old peasantess bawled out at us sarcastically.

"Nothing," I yelled back. "But if you've got any old rags, or bones, or bottles——"

Lourdes, as the reader is doubtless aware, is a town in the Pyrenees made famous by its sacred grotto. It has become during the last twenty years or so the Mecca of the Roman Catholic Church, and annually attracts hundreds and thousands of pilgrims, who come not only from every European country but even from America to pray at the holy shrine and drink and bathe in the waters that trickle from the grotto. It was now the height of the pilgrim season, as we quickly became aware, for turning past the market place we gained the narrow street which leads through the congested heart of the town from the railway station to the Place de la Grotte—a street packed tight with a solid moving mass of men, women, children, tramcars, automobiles, and market carts.

Oh! the noise of it—the utter bewilderment!

Before I had time to leap from the cart,

Blanchette was drawn into that mighty current as a stick is drawn into a river in spate. There were pilgrims to right of us, pilgrims to left of us, pilgrims in front, pilgrims behind, all of them shouting, singing, laughing, hustling, pushing onwards to the grotto.

Blanchette trod on people's toes, thrust the shafts into the backs of others, and generally made a nuisance of herself. There were shouts, imprecations, and words unholy!

"Why don't you control your donkey?"

"A thousand black devils—why do you not go with care?"

"*Mon Dieu!* you will kill someone!"

"Why do you not turn back?"

Turn back? We might as well try to stem the Amazon. We were drawn along in that human stream with a force irresistible.

Those pilgrims who were not being trodden upon by Blanchette were loud in their praises of her beauty, and both Billy and I came in for a good deal of frank discussion.

"Don't worry," I whispered hoarsely to Billy. "We can't have far to go; the worst is over."

But it wasn't—not quite. We had reached that part of the street where it dips steeply to the bridge across the River Pau and becomes so narrow that there is hardly room for two carriages to pass.

The pilgrims were jammed tightly up against Blanchette's perspiring flanks, and she could scarcely get her lungs expanded once she had emptied them. Suddenly she seemed to reach the limit of endurance. A very large pilgrim had the seat of his trousers forced hard against her muzzle. She made a sudden grab at him, or rather at it. He shouted and tried to turn on her, whereupon she gave him another bite, kicked, cleared a space for herself—and charged!

Goodness only knows how it happened that no one was hurt in the rush she made, for pilgrims went down like ninepins on all sides.

I pulled on the reins with all my might. People grabbed at the bridle, but before Blanchette came to a standstill she had mounted the kerb of the narrow pavement, swept a stall clear of its stock, and knocked down a revolving postcard stand.

When the tornado moderated sufficiently I gave my wife my pocket-book and asked her to console the owners of the goods; then I hung on to the back of the cart while we were swept over the bridge to the other side.

Here, to my inexpressible joy, I found a small street leading off the main one, and at the end of it a palatial hotel. I didn't bother to look at the name of it. I handed over Blanchette and the cart to the page-boy, and tore into the office.

"You have a room?" I inquired of the manager.

"You are English?" he questioned.

"Yes," I answered.

"Good," he said. "One is always glad to see the English."

I knew why, two days later, when I came to pay my bill!

Lourdes was the end of our wanderings in the Pyrenees, and it was here that we finally parted with our dear Blanchette. We sold her to a market gardener—a nice, happy-looking old man with the light of kindness in his eyes. He promised to give her a fortnight's rest, and assured us that her daily tasks would never be so strenuous as they had been since she kept company with us.

Billy cried when she put her arms about Blanchette's neck and said good-bye, and I'll confess I had a lump in my throat far larger and far more painful than ever she had raised on my legs with her wicked hind hoofs.

As I turned to go she suddenly thrust her cold moist muzzle under my arm and made a queer whinnying sound. I hugged her tightly.

"Good old Blanchette," I said in a very husky voice, "Good old Blanchette!"

"Good old Blanchette!"

THE END.

"Three Asses in the Pyrenees" has proved so popular that we have commissioned Mr. Walmsley to write for us an account of his adventures and misadventures in connection with an expedition that set out for Timbuctoo. The trip was not exactly a success from the point of view of the promoters, but it yielded some experiences which Mr. Walmsley describes in his usual delightful fashion. The new series will start in an early issue under the title of

"THE ROAD TO TIMBUCTOO."

Short Stories

MY MOTOR-BOAT.

By LEONARD LACHMAN.

Illustrated by G. E. HILEY.

What happened to a man who bought a second-hand motor-boat and tried to run it.

I DECIDED I should like to have a motor-boat, and after looking up all the advertisements in the "Boats for Sale" columns of the newspapers, and finding out that most of the craft advertised as floating palaces were mere mud-scows, I finally located a boat that pleased me. She was thirty-two feet long, sturdily built, and was equipped with what the man who sold it to me called a "heavy duty" motor. He was quite right; it was the heaviest duty of my life to get that engine started.

In anticipation of buying a boat I had joined the Long Beach Yacht Club, and when I had purchased a yachting cap I felt *very* nautical.

My main object in purchasing the boat was to be able to go fishing in comfort whenever I had a few hours to spare. My first opportunity to go out occurred on a beautiful day in August—one of those *dolce far niente* days when you would rather let a mosquito bite you than make the effort to kill it. Taking my chauffeur along—I relied on him to look after the motor—and a friend who is the champion lazy man of the world, we went down to the Club, stepped into what we thought was the club dinghy, and rowed out to our launch.

My heart swelled with pride as I started to turn over the motor. It was a good motor, but as the chauffeur put it, ought to have been running a saw-mill. After four hours of more or less continuous cranking, without apparent result, I lost a good deal of my original pride of ownership. Finally, just as the sun was directly overhead, by accident I kicked something that I should have kicked hours ago, and the engine started off with a roar. The boat also started—not for the open channel but direct for the dock, tangling and breaking the lines of some men who were fishing from the side. Curious how mad a fisherman will get over a little thing like that! Even my lazy friend lent a hand to get us out of that whirlwind of curses, and we were soon on our way rejoicing.

We were chugging along at a good rate when I looked behind and saw that we had brought the dinghy with us in tow. It had been difficult enough to get the boat to go forwards, and when I thought of turning back I decided that even if I was arrested for piracy I would not risk a breakdown to return the dinghy.

Along the tortuous channel we dashed as fast as the "saw-mill motor" would carry us. We passed every craft on the water—even boats that I knew could do fifteen or twenty miles an hour—and I was thinking that I had bought a racer in disguise when I very quickly learnt why we were leaving all the others so far behind. *They* knew there were shifting sand-bars in the channel; I didn't. While I was crashing along at the terrific speed of nine miles an hour they were going as slow as possible. Suddenly, with a bang, we hit a sand-bar with such a jolt that it woke the lazy man up—and it takes some shock to do that! Our noble craft stuck hard and fast, and there was nothing to do but take off all our clothes, put on bathing suits—which we luckily had with us—and jump over and push her off the bar. If you have never tried to push a thirty-two foot boat, equipped with a saw-mill motor, off a sand-bar, you have no idea of what real work is. Not only does it put kinks and twists in all your muscles, but it keeps you under water half the time; and it is awfully hard to swear under such conditions. The lazy man stayed on board and gave enough orders to get an ocean liner off the rocks. The poor crew—the chauffeur and myself—finally got her off after a terrific effort. The motor must have been in a sympathetic mood, for it started with half a turn.

A short run, without further incident, and we arrived at the fishing-grounds—just too late for high tide, which is the best time to catch fish in this locality.

We were now directly opposite a channel

that led to the open ocean and the water was pretty rough, so much so that owner, mechanic, and lazy man presently began to feel distinctly sea-sick. By a unanimous vote we decided to go home.

The chauffeur had just started to crank the motor when I heard a familiar noise in the carburetter. On my car that sound meant "no petrol," and I made one mad rush for the tank—only to find it empty! An empty stomach is bad, an empty pocket-book is worse, but three land-lubbers in a motor-boat with an empty petrol tank and night coming on is the worst of all.

On a spit of sand about half a mile away we spied a U.S. Coast Guard station. I gave the chauffeur a jug, and he rowed over in the purloined dinghy to borrow some petrol, the round trip taking him about an hour. It was a hard pull because of the cross-currents coming in from the ocean. When he got back he carefully placed the jug of petrol on the deck of the launch and then, turning round to make the row-boat fast, he kicked the jug overboard! Instinctively he made a grab for the jug, forgetting all about the dinghy, which was swiftly carried away by the current! Now we *were* in a mess, and even the lazy man came to life! Luckily for us, however, help was at hand.

The life-guards must have seen our dinghy break loose through their glasses, for they promptly started their motor-boat and, after a chase, headed the run-away dinghy off and brought it back to us. Then, of course, we had to ask them for more petrol, and I felt about as small and foolish as it is possible to feel. But the guards treated us royally, and advised us to head straight for home—which we were perfectly willing to do. The old

"Even my lazy friend lent a hand to get us out of that whirlwind of curses."

saw-mill motor must have realized that it was in danger, or perhaps I kicked the right thing again, for it started off with a merry clatter. Waving good-bye to the friendly guards, we slowly picked our way homewards.

We were towing the dinghy behind us and, being grossly ignorant of everything relating to boats, we had let her trail about twenty-five feet astern. Slowing down so as to avoid a sand-bar, we allowed the tow-rope to get so slack that it wound itself round the propeller shaft, and stopped us with a jerk. It was now about eight o'clock, and we had no time to lose if we were going to get in before dark. There was only one thing to do, jump overboard and cut the rope away from the shaft. This I did without much relish.

My friend, the lazy man, has an odd habit of getting sudden fits of industriousness, and I was afraid he might start the motor while I was struggling with the rope, thereby cutting my head off. Fortunately for me, however, he had fallen asleep, and troubled us no more. Having removed the rope I scrambled on board again, and after coughing a good deal, the "saw-mill," with much moaning and groaning, took us home worn out and dejected.

One of my fondest dreams before I owned the boat was of making a neat landing at the club dock and noticing the unspoken admiration on the faces of the old-timers standing around. When we came in sight of the dock I saw the old-timers right enough, but there was no admiration on their faces; they looked anxious and even angry. On coming ashore I expected words of sympathy and kindness and expressions of joy at our safe return. All that happened, however, was that a man rushed up to me and burst out: "Say, you took my fishing dinghy! That doesn't belong to the club!"

When I meekly handed him back his boat with about three feet of rope tied to it, instead of the twenty-five yards with which it started out, he almost fell off the dock, and was so angry that he has never spoken to me since.

We related our experience to the other members, and they saw the funny side of it, but ever since then I have had the nick-name of "Sea-going."

HOW WE KILLED THE "RAT."

By STUART MCKISSICK.

Illustrated by TOM HALL.

Two engineers, taking up their quarters in an abandoned mountain hut, set out to kill an intruding rat, but the scheme went sadly wrong, as this little story shows.

IN February, 1914, accompanied by Mr. Fred C——, I had occasion to spend a week at an abandoned mining claim in the mountains of Southern Oregon.

Near the entrance to the main tunnel stood an old shack that had once been the blacksmith's shop. All the materials entering into its construction had been cut and shaped from the timber with which the hills were abundantly clothed. Four upright posts were sunk at the corners, and these were joined with a horizontal framework of poles. The rafters were likewise poles; the walls and roof were of pine shakes. There was one door and no window.

This shack we decided to clean up somewhat. We found some boards which, when supported by the forge on one side and the anvil on the other, made a convenient table. In the corner of the shack farthest from the door, set diagonally, stood an old heating-stove with a flat top which proved to be excellent for cooking purposes.

In the evening, when our strenuous day's work was finished, we would foregather in the blacksmith shop and prepare the principal meal of the day. Then we would draw up our chairs—old powder boxes—and address ourselves to a sumptuous repast. To those who have lived in the open further comment along this line is superfluous.

One night, as we thus dined in state by the light of our two flickering candles, the tail of my eye caught sight of an object moving on the wall of the shack. It proved to be a mighty wood-rat, creeping along one of the horizontal poles. I hurled a tin can at him and he disappeared.

Now the wood-rat is more frequently called in these parts the "pack-rat" or "swap-rat," owing to a certain curious habit which may be the outgrowth of his own peculiar notions of honesty. His den consists of a large conical pile of rubbish in which sticks and pine-cones usually predominate, but which may also include any object not too large for him to move about. Should your own belongings happen to lie within the circle of his activities you would probably discover that something had

"'Mac, don't move,' he breathed, 'we're up against it.'"

happened to them. A candle, a stick of dynamite, or a pocket-knife will be missing and its pace occupied by a stick of wood of about the same size. An apple, a potato, or an onion will be replaced by a pine-cone or a stone. In the spring of 1921 we had to demolish the den of a pack-rat which had been constructed in this same old blacksmith's shop. Among other queer objects gathered by the industrious rodents we found a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, intact. The nearest house is two miles away, and we are still wondering where on earth the glasses came from and just what object a pack-rat's sense of the eternal fitness of things may have deemed a suitable exchange for a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles.

By previous experience Fred and I were well aware of this interesting little trick of the rats, and what undesirable neighbours they are wont to become. Having packed in on our backs a store of supplies for the week we had no desire to have useful food spirited away in exchange for rubbish. We decided that, at the first opportunity, Mr. Pack-rat should be killed.

The next night, as we were busy with our evening meal, there came from under the table, at our very feet, a familiar shuffling noise.

"There's that pack-rat!" cried Fred.

Now the floor beneath the table was littered with hammers, drills, buckets, lumps of ore and other odds and ends, and we knew it would be difficult to get a good square whack at the rat. He appeared to be exploring these articles at his leisure, so we waited for him to shift to a position more advantageous for our purpose. As he did not do so readily, however, Fred said: "You throw the flashlight on him, and I'll biff him with this loading stick."

Agreeable to orders I flashed the light under the table. Fred stood ready, with stick poised for the blow, but he did not strike. Instead, he slowly straightened his back and turned toward me. "Mac, don't

move," he breathed, "we're up against it."

I didn't move. I *knew* we were up against it.

Presently our charming little visitor hopped up on the forge and, having investigated its working parts, placed his front paws on the edge of the table opposite us and thrust an inquisitive nose in our direction. I am sure our attitude must have been entirely respectful, although neither of us offered to shake hands with him. You will understand our feelings when I tell you that, instead of a pack-rat, our fellow-diner was that particular form of rodent known to science as *Mephitis mephitica*, popularly designated skunk!

The Author, Mr. Stuart McKissick.

I know now, but I did not know then, that had we thrown him a bit of almost any of our edibles he would have appropriated it and disappeared at once. Failing this knowledge, ours was necessarily the part of patiently waiting his pleasure in the matter of moving about. Soon he dropped down to the floor, and we decided to "shoo" him gently out through the door. Needless to state, we couldn't use much coercion with him, and he was evidently in no particular hurry to leave these apparently comfortable surroundings, but we finally managed to persuade him to make his get-away. There was half a foot of fresh snow on the ground outside, and he hopped daintily from one foot-print to another until he had gained the mouth of one of the mine tunnels. I followed him cautiously into this old tunnel until he disappeared in a jumble of rock and timbers where a cave-in had occurred. Then, satisfied that the beast would not revisit us that night, I returned to the shack and closed the door, to find Fred busy chinking up every crack and cranny he could find that might afford an entrance for our furry friend. At last he finished his task. "There!" he said, in satisfied tones, "I'd like to see any skunk get in here *now*."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than from under the table came a familiar scuffling noise, only this time it was much more familiar than before! We needed no flashlight to tell us the truth. Whether it was the same skunk, or one of his near relatives, and how he got in, we have never been able to say.

We tried the "shooing" game once more, but this time our friend the skunk was of a different opinion about leaving. In his own stubborn way he showed us plainly that he had decided to make us quite a lengthy visit. Finally he worked his way up to one of the horizontal poles which was at about the same elevation as the top of the stove.

It so happened the fire had only just been replenished, and was now burning at full heat. This proved decidedly uncomfortable to our visitor, but he soon espied a haven of refuge in the little space behind the post in the corner where the horizontal poles met and quickly dived into it. Here we got a hearty laugh out of the situation, awkward as it was. Having cooled off somewhat the skunk stuck his nose out from behind the post preparatory to exploring along the pole, but the fierce heat caused him to jerk his head back again in most lugubrious fashion. Then he tried to emerge from the other side, with the same result. First at one side and then at the other he kept peeping out until the heat had abated somewhat. Then our visitor came out and quickly descended to the floor. The time now seemed ripe for the "shooing" game, but the open door and an outside snow-vista apparently had no attractions for him.

Shortly after this he ran up the wall and clung to the shakes, and as his head projected well out into the room I decided to take a chance. Taking careful aim with the loading-stick I whacked him smartly over the head and killed him instantly. Up to this time he had not said a word, but what he said in his dying moment was quite enough, and we had to hurriedly transfer ourselves and our culinary department to one of the tunnels.

A WOMAN IN UNKNOWN ALBANIA

by Rose Wilder Lane

Very few people know just where Albania is; still fewer know anything about it. The interior is a maze of mountains, inhabited by wild tribes who have preserved their independence and their own peculiar manners and customs for thousands of years.

In these fascinating articles Mrs. Lane describes her adventures among the remote northern mountains — a picturesque country where the tribal blood-feud still flourishes and where the rare Western visitor finds himself back in the Middle Ages.

Illustrated by R. CATON WOODVILLE, and from Photographs by ANNETTE MARQUIS.

V.—(*Conclusion.*)

WE started down the bed of a waterfall, the guide and I; the bad going, the exhausting force of the current, my dizziness and breath-taking pains made the first half-mile a blur. When we came out on a cliff-edge I sat down, and then for the first time I saw Rexh. He stood very gravely, watching me; the rain had melted the dye in his red fez, and little streams of it ran down his round, serious face.

"It is much better for me to come with you, Mrs. Lane," he said. "You do not know the language, and this Shala man, he is a bad man."

"But, Rexh, my dear!" I said. "No, no; you must go back to Miss Cleveland and say that I say you cannot come." He might never again have an opportunity to see that farther interior country; it was a trip to dream of for years and to remember for ever. I had not asked him to give it up; I did not want him to. I was safe enough; all the tribal laws protected me, no one had any motive for injuring me, and the Shala man, however bad, knew that I had no money, and that he would be well paid when he delivered me in Scutari.

"All that is true, Mrs. Lane. But I think it best for me to come with you," said Rexh, inflexibly. And because I really had no strength for combating such determination, I got up and went on, the Shala man going before me with my pack, protected by a *poncho*, on his back, and Rexh following after.

We climbed up cliffs and lowered ourselves down them; we slipped and slid and jumped down more little waterfalls; we waded knee-deep streams and struggled over decomposed shale that clutched at our feet like sand; we came down a switch-back trail to the banks of the Lumi Shala, and the Shala man carried me across it on top of his pack. It was all like a nightmare, of which I remember clearly only my thirst. Though I was as wet as anything that lives in the sea, I could not get enough to drink, and every one of the millions of springs invited my drinking cup. Rexh, whose endless task was to fill it for me, protested. "In the rains, the water makes you sick," he said. "It turns to knives inside you. You will be sick, Mrs. Lane."

If I were in France, I knew, the doctors would put me in a hot room with all the windows closed, and insist that I must not have much water. In America I should be given fresh air and water, and bathed to keep down the fever. Well, I was in Albania, and I reasoned that, if I was to have pneumonia, I might as well have it on the mountain trails as in a cold, wet house; and when I got to Scutari I could be as ill as I liked.

"If the water makes me sick, Rexh, and if I get ill, you are not to mind," I said. "You are to get me down to Scutari somehow. Above all things do not let me stay in a native house."

"Yes, Mrs. Lane." Then we began to climb up the next mountain, and kneeling on a boulder above me to help pull me up its side, Rexh said: "Your hand is like a hot coal, Mrs. Lane, and this is not such a very big boulder. I think we must get a *mooshk*."

"What is a *mooshk*?"

"He is what you ride on, I forget the English word—with long ears and very little feet."

"A mule?"

"Yes, that is it. We must get a mule for you to ride."

"Oh, do you think we can? Ask the Shala man if he knows where there is one."

The Shala man, to my joy, said at once that there was one at the next house. So we went into it, and sat for some time by the fire, and were given coffee, our steaming clothes making the place like a Turkish bath. But there was no mule; the Shala man said we would find one at the next house. The houses were perhaps a quarter of a mile apart here, scattered along the mountain sides above the Lumi Shala; and the Shala man stopped at every one of them. There would be a delirium of struggling up slopes, and then an interval of smoke and fire and thick sweet coffee, and then out into the water again. At last I began to protest.

"I won't go into this house," I said flatly. "We ought to make forty miles at least before we stop, if we're to get to Scutari in three days. We must keep going all the time. I'm not going to stop in any more houses."

"Mrs. Lane, we have to," said Rexh.

"But why? It's nonsense, this man's saying always that the mule is at the next house. These people know whether there's a mule in the village or not. We needn't stop at *every* house."

"Yes, we must, Mrs. Lane. We are in Shoshi, and this man will be killed if he does not take care. You do not look like a woman, Mrs. Lane. You look like a Montenegrin man, in those pants and that long grey coat. He has to stop at every house so that the people will see he is travelling with a woman."

"But I thought we were going through Pultit."

"This is Shoshi, Mrs. Lane."

The Shala man stood easily on the slope beside us, rain running over him as though he were a stone in a stream, his rifle held carefully protected from the wet by a fold of the *poncho*.

"What do you mean," I demanded furiously, "by bringing me through Shoshi when you agreed to take me through Pultit?" And when Rexh, like a small image of an accusing judge, had translated, the Shala man looked like an artless child surprised in innocent mischief.

"He says he thought it would be fun," translated Rexh, "because they can't kill him while you're here, and he likes to go into their houses and drink coffee."

A STRANGE JOKE.

I sat for some moments on the wet boulder, wiping my streaming face now and then with my hand, and staring at that man with the peculiar sense of humour. So he thought it funny, did he, to bring me through a tribe whose rifles were oiled to kill him, and to sit at their firesides perfectly safe in my protection? Fastened in my own little affairs like a turtle in his shell, I sat there black with rage, thinking that I would like to murder him myself.

"Tell him, I hope he has enjoyed the joke, for it's over," I said at last. "You're Mohammedan, Rexh, and safe; just call to the house and tell them who I am, and ask if they have a mule. And when they ask us in, tell them glory to their house, but I cannot stop; I have made a vow to get to Scutari."

The Shala man was so downcast at passing even one household he could not crow over that my harshness would have relented in any other circumstances. But I was convinced that I was in for pneumonia, and every impulse in me concentrated in one obsession—to get to Scutari.

"After this, Rexh, you are managing this party," I said.

"Yes, Mrs. Lane," said he, toiling up the trail like a small pyjama-clad gnome. And with all the sagacity and resource with which he manages his household of younger refugee children in Scutari, he took charge. The clearest picture remaining to me of that day is that of Rexh, his head tipped back and the staff in his left hand firmly planted while with his right forefinger he sternly laid down the law to a thoroughly cowed Shala man.

It was Rexh who decreed that he should carry the pack while the Shala man carried me up the worst of the slopes; it was he who sent a man from one of the houses to climb the nearest mountain and call down the valley that we were searching for a mule; it was he who decided when we should stop to eat.

We went on over the trails, driven by the unflagging Rexh. His quiet persistency really maddened the Shala man; it was like that of a fly. He drove the Shala man onward without a pause, up and down cliffs, over bridges of logs just missed by roaring cascades, through streams whose currents made him stagger. Half the time Rexh demanded that the Shala man carry me; the rest of the time the two were pulling me upward, or letting me downward, by both hands, as though I were a bundle. And just as the light was failing we stood on the brink of the most magnificent canyon I have ever seen.

There were depths below depths of it, falling away from narrow green terrace to terrace, and far down, at the edge of a drop that looked as though it were a crack sheer to the centre of the world, there was a stone house.

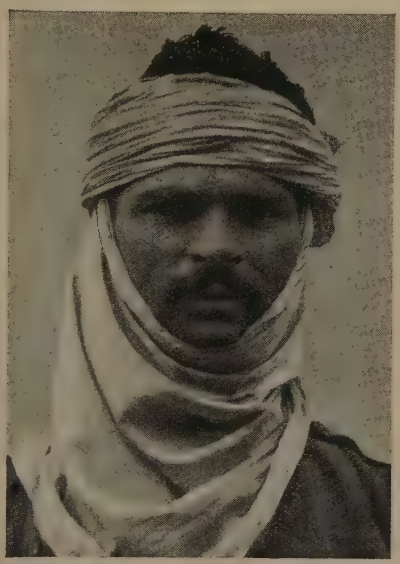
We knew it was a large house; we could hardly have seen it if it had been a small one; it looked as large as a match-box.

"The Byraktor of Shoshi lives there,

Mrs. Lane, and I think we had better stay with him to-night," said Rexh. "There is a priest, but he is four miles farther down the valley, and we would have to come back in the morning, for this is where the trail begins to cross the mountains to Scutari. Also, if there is a mule in Shoshi, the Byraktor will know him."

So we began dropping down to the house, the Shala man much pleased at the idea of calling upon his enemies' war-chief. We went easily, for the way was a gigantic staircase of cliff and terraced green field. Each field had its little house of stone; the trails down the cliff were broadened and held up by walls of stone. True, the centres of the trails were running ankle-deep in water, and springs gushed from every wall, but the effect was of ease, and order, and fresh green things, and before we reached the house of the Byraktor my head was clearer and my breathing no longer an agony.

How to account for it I do not know; I am sure that in happier conditions I should have had pneumonia. But the fact is that after nearly forty miles of incredibly difficult journeying over those mountains in twelve rain-drenched hours, I came to the Byraktor's fire weak, it is true, and trembling like a convalescent, but with fever gone and my lungs merely aching.



The Shala man who acted as Mrs. Lane's guide on the journey back to Scutari.

THE BYRAKTOR OF SHOSHI.

The Byraktor received us at his gateway, for his house was surrounded by a high fence, almost a stockade, of woven branches. He was a tall, keen, quick man with bright dark eyes and aquiline nose and thin lips, framed by the white turban's fold beneath his chin; a jacket of black sheep's wool; one massive jewelled silver chain on his breast. His swift smile was warm and beautiful, but one had a sense of reservations behind it; he welcomed the audacious Shala man without a quiver, and ushered us up the stone steps to the second floor of his house.

There were several rooms, divided from the main large one by partitions of woven willow boughs, and from the large room a high, arched doorway in the stone wall led into further regions. At least forty men and women and children—five generations—were around the fire on the floor. There was a little flurry of welcome and rearrangement, and in a moment we were in the centre of the circle, sitting on thick mats of woven straw, while the Byraktor made our coffee in the coals.

The women were beautifully dressed; I had not seen so much elegance of embroidery, of coloured head-kerchiefs, earrings, and chains of silver and gold coins. Their dark, beautifully modelled faces, large dark eyes and heavy braids of black hair were set off by the profusion of rich colour. Most of them were sitting on low stools, embroidering or working *opanki*, and the white-garbed men lounged at their feet, closer to the fire, resting on their elbows and smoking.

There was the delicate negotiation about the mule; the Byraktor owned one, but he did not want to take it to Scutari. I left that to Rexh; the Byraktor listened to him as courteously as though the boy had been twenty years older, and Rexh bargained with him as with an equal. A hundred kronen, Rexh said tentatively, at last, but even at that terrific price the Byraktor did not seem eager to make the trip (for of course he himself would go where his mule went), and Rexh thought it best to drop the question for awhile.

"Where do you come from?" one of the youths asked me, and when I had replied, "In what direction from here is America?"

"California, the part of America from which I come," I answered—and did not very greatly stretch the truth—"is directly through the earth, on the other side."

Why they sat up in such excitement I did not know; I had expected surprise, but not such a volley of questions, not such a visible sensation. Rexh sat replying to them, earnestly explaining, making a gesture now and then—their eyes followed his hands, fascinated. Little Rexh, sitting erect in his pyjama coat, the streaks of red dye now dried fantastically on his chubby face, held them all spellbound, while I begged him in vain to tell me what he was saying.

"It is nothing, Mrs. Lane," he answered me at last. "I am telling them about the map. I am telling them that the map is not flat, as it looks, but round, like a ball."

He was telling them that the earth is

round! And hearing my voice they appealed to me in a bombardment of questions.

Is the earth really round? Yes.

You have seen it, you know that it is round? Yes.

You have been around it yourself? Yes, I said mendaciously.

They sat back and considered this. Then they asked particulars. They could understand that the earth was curved, for they had seen that the mountains were not flat, so it would be possible for earth to be curved. But were the seas curved, also? Would water curve? I said that it would, that, indeed, it did.

Had I been upon the great spaces of water, and seen that they were curved?

I had been upon the seas, I said, and they were curved. They did not look curved, because the earth was so large and the eye saw so little of it, but they *were* curved, for one could go quite around the earth on them.

They smoked over this for some time. The Byraktor rescued his forgotten coffee-pot in deep abstraction. I did not expect them to believe what I had said; how could they? It must have appeared to them the wildest of fairy-tales.

Then the Byraktor looked up. "If the solid earth is round," he said, "and if the water lies upon it in a curve, then this earth is moving very rapidly. For if the earth were standing still, the water would fall off."

My astonishment was profound. I felt myself a child beside that mind, and I thought that a man who could wrestle so swiftly with a new fact and evolve from it an even more amazing conclusion was no man for me to contend with in a little matter of hiring a mule and getting to Scutari.

Presently large flocks of sheep and goats were driven through the room, past the fire, and into the darkness beyond the arched doorway. Rain-drenched shepherdesses, half clad in rags, followed them, and having with much noise of tearing branches given them their dried oak-boughs to eat during the night, the shepherdesses returned and sat by the fire, addressing the Byraktor in tones of accustomed equality.

There was a constant movement in the room; women coming and going, nursing their babies and tucking blankets more tightly over the cradles, undressing the smaller children, bringing casks of water, and making cornbread.

One could always amuse the women by asking them about ages; they guessed mine all the way from sixteen to forty, and there was one of them, a splendid, smiling woman, good natured and competent, whose age I guessed to be forty. She laughed aloud, showing all her white, perfect teeth, and said that she was seventy-two, and that the Byraktor was her daughter's son.

"You have been drinking the new water," she said wisely, though I had not mentioned the ache of my breathing. "You have the feeling of knives here," and she touched her chest. "But do not worry, it is all right; it is only the water, and when the rain stops you will not feel the knives any more?" And she patted my shoulder comfortingly.

The question of the mule still hung unsettled. The Byraktor seemed to be thinking deeply; he asked the Shala man many questions about Rroc Perolli—I caught the name, and asked Rexh to listen, for I felt myself surrounded by web within web of intrigue, but Rexh said that the Shala man had nothing to tell, except that Perolli was in the mountains.

After that he went to the other side of the fire, beside his grandmother, and he sat for a long time talking to her. "Shkodra," I heard, which is the Albanian name of Scutari, and "*mooshk*," and I knew he was talking of me and the mule I wanted to hire, but why it should be such a long and grave discussion I did not understand.

THE BRIDE.

Then we had dinner, served on several little tables, that all might eat at the same time. The men and women ate together, but only the youngest and most beautiful woman ate at the Byraktor's table, silent and respectful, dipping her long, aristocratic fingers diffidently in the dish. I thought she was his wife, but Rexh said no; she was his son's bride, still in those six months when she must not speak until spoken to, nor sit unless asked, and the Byraktor liked her very much and wished to make her feel at home, because she was lonely.

After we had all washed our hands for the second time, and the men had had an after-dinner smoke, the Byraktor said that he would himself escort me to-morrow on the road to Scutari. I should ride his mule, and it was arranged that we should start at four o'clock.

Then his grandmother made three beds, on three sides of the fire. She brought a two-inch-thick mat of woven straw and laid it on the floor, over it she spread a handsome blanket of goats' hair dyed in stripes of magenta and purple; under one end of the mat she put a triangular piece of wood to serve as pillow, and when I lay down she tucked other blankets over me. Rexh and the Shala man had the other mats, and all the Byraktor's family went to their own places, leaving the big room and the dying fire to us three guests.

At four in the morning the house was astir. Out of the darkness yawning men came to stir the slumbering fire; the Byraktor appeared without his turban, a weird figure with his shaven head and long black scalp-lock, and began to make the

morning coffee; the sheep and goats were driven out into the rain by the ragged shepherdesses. I sat up and put on my *opanki*, and the sleepy Rexh, still streaked with red dye from his fez, rolled out of his blankets.

"To-day," I said, "we get to Scutari." For the pains in my lungs had returned, and I had lain all night half-waking, haunted by fever-visions and voices.

"Yes, yes," said the Shala man. "I swear it! To-day we get to Scutari." But the Byraktor looked at him, saying nothing, a quizzical look in his dark eyes, and leisurely went on with his coffee-making.

"Rexh," I said at five o'clock, "why don't they start?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Lane," he replied earnestly. "They will not tell." He sat listening to every casual word, and thinking deeply. A dozen times I had suggested that we should be starting.

"Tell the Byraktor we must go!" I said at six o'clock in the doorway. For a long time all the world had been a clear grey, shadowed only by the falling rain. "I pay a hundred kronen for his mule only because it gets me to Scutari to-night."

Rexh announced this firmly to the Byraktor; the Byraktor, listening attentively, assented with a shake of his head.

At seven o'clock I walked madly up and down the small stone porch. The Byraktor's gendarme had arrived; he stood washing his face in a stone basin filled with rain-water. At every splash he raised his head, solemnly crossed himself, and made the sign of the cross toward the dawn. Inside the house the Byraktor was deep in conversation with his grandmother.

"They are talking politics, Mrs. Lane," Rexh reported. "I do not yet quite understand, but I think that you will not get to Scutari to-day."

"Rexh," I said, "listen to me. I *will* get to Scutari to-day! In ten minutes by my watch I shall start to walk to Scutari, without the mule. I have waited long enough. Tell that to the Byraktor."

The Byraktor came to the door and looked at me kindly. He had put on his turban; he was a figure of rather awe-inspiring dignity. "Slowly, slowly, little by little," said he indulgently, and went back into the house.

When eight minutes had passed his grandmother came out—I was now walking restlessly up and down the soaked, cornstalk-strewn yard—and led out of the lower part of the house the "mule"—the very smallest donkey I have ever seen. She tied him to the wicker fence and brought out a measure of corn. "Slowly, slowly," said she to him.

A moment later I interrupted them by the most courteous of farewells. I blessed them and their house and their past and their future, their families, their tribe, their hospitality and their mule, and then I left. The Shala man followed me, protesting; Rexh trudged beside me, saying nothing, but very disapproving.

"You cannot do such a thing to the Byraktor of Shoshi!" said the Shala man.

"I have done it to the Byraktor of Shoshi," said I violently, gasping on the trail. I kept my knees stiff with sheer rage, but on the first terrace above the Byraktor's house not even that could keep me going, and I sat down in a heap to rest.

The sun had not yet cleared the top of the stupendous sweep of striped rock that soared above the chasm; it could hardly do so before noon. The canyon was filled with silver light; the rain itself seemed silver; the rose and blue and white of that great cliff glowed softly through it, and the greens of the little fields below were soft as mist. I sat looking at this, and insensibly realized why time was so little to these people, and how unimportant, really, all our little hastes are.

Then, coming leisurely across the green, like little toys on a carpet, appeared the Byraktor, his gendarme, and the minute mule. In half an hour they reached us, calm and unperturbed. The donkey bore a wooden saddle almost as large as himself; they placed me on this, and leisurely began to climb.

"To-night," said I firmly, "I shall be in Scutari."

Rexh translated this to the Byraktor, but the Byraktor said nothing.

We proceeded slowly over the mountains. This was wilder going than I had yet seen, and again the simplicity of these people was borne in upon me. Coming to places that, to any European understanding, would be absolutely impassable, the Byraktor's action was simple and direct. He wrapped around his wrist the steel chain that held the mule by the neck, and easily, without haste, he went on. The mule came too; it could not do otherwise, and when it would have fallen the steel chain and the gendarme's firm grip on its tail kept it going until its feet got their grip again. I was, of course, on the mule's back, and where it went I went, too.

A NERVE-TRYING JOURNEY.

The Byraktor and the gendarme thought nothing of thus casually carrying between them a mule with me on its back, and very shortly—so adaptable is the human mind—I thought little of it myself. I recall sitting there, comfortable in that arm-chair of a saddle, taking my smoked glasses out of my pocket and polishing them; the sun was piercing through the clouds, and the glare on the snow above was blinding to my eyes. We were passing along a trail really too narrow for the mule; my knees grazed a cliff, and a glance over my shoulder went straight down into depths where pine-

tree tops looked like a lawn. At every second the mule's tiny hoofs slipped and rocks showered downward, the chain tightened around the Byraktor's wrist and the muscles of his shoulders knotted as the mule's weight bore on them. It crossed my mind, as I settled the smoked glasses on my nose, that two weeks earlier my heart would have stopped beating at the very sight of that trail, and then, as it dipped downward and I heard the gendarme bracing his feet and felt the mule's weight sag against the strength of that useful tail, I looked up and forgot everything else in contemplation of the snow-piled heights.

Presently we were crossing the foot of the largest waterfall I had yet encountered. It was so large that the men unsaddled the mule, stripped themselves, and wrapped their clothes in several bundles before attempting to cross it. Then they made a living chain of themselves; the Byraktor at its head advanced to a waterworn boulder in the centre of the current, braced himself firmly, and became the pivot on which the chain moved. The end man carried over the clothes, bundle by bundle wrapped in my *poncho;* then he carried me across — I was soaked in spray, but that did not matter. Then he put one arm around the donkey and supported it across, and then the saddle, and then he went back once more and took the protesting Rexh and brought him over. The water was above their waists; their white bodies slanted in the glassy current; three yards below them the water poured in a crystal mass over the edge of the pool, a second waterfall that struck in roaring foam fifty feet below.

The worst of the current was between me and the central rock where the Byraktor was braced; several times the end man's feet slipped there, notably when he crossed with the donkey, which I gave up for lost, but each time the chain of hands held firm.

"Good! If we're crossing the snow-fields already, we'll surely be in Scutari by to-night," I said. But I was joyful too soon, for when we reached the first of the snow the party stopped. The Byraktor sat down on a rock and lighted a cigarette; the gendarme, without a word, began to climb a tall cliff that over-hung the trail. What did it mean? Rexh did not know, and I sat impatiently on the mule, which began nosing through the snow for something to eat.

Then overhead the high, keen "telephone call" rang out, answered by far, thin voices that sounded as though the crystal air itself had been tapped, far away, by a giant finger. Even while the voices called and answered in the sky, silent men began to appear suddenly, though I had not noticed their approach. It was startling to see a strange, turbaned head beside my elbow, to find that between two glances a dignified, half-naked man was sitting on the rock beside the Byraktor.

Rexh came and led the mule to a little distance. The figure of the gendarme, against the sky, raised its rifle, and I put my hands over my ears just in time to dull the echo-crash. "It is polite to go away for a little distance, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh. "The Byraktor has called a council of all the chiefs of Shoshi."

THE COUNCIL IN THE MOUNTAINS.

In half an hour twenty men surrounded the Byraktor. They were all, like the Byraktor and his gendarme, in cotton underwear, barefooted, and naked above the waist, many of them wearing on their heads only the tiny round white cap that covered their scalp-locks. Each of them carried his rifle on a woven strap slung over his shoulder, and all had an arsenal in their sashes. They sat on small rocks, or on the snow-filmed ground, in a group about the Byraktor's boulder.

The council lasted half an hour, three quarters of an hour, an hour. It concerned grave matters; the earnestness of those intent bodies and keen faces said that. Meantime Rexh and I talked in low tones.

"I am not paying the Byraktor a hundred kronen to sit here while he holds a council," said I. "Do you think he intends to get me to Scutari to-night?"

"I do not think so, Mrs. Lane. But if you want to get there it shall be done. We must consider many things," Rexh used his fingers to check them off. "First, the Byraktor must be thinking a great deal about the new Tirana Government. You remember that he asked the Shala man about Rroc Perolli. Also he talked a long time with his mother's mother, and that was about politics. Second, the Byraktor holds a council. Therefore he is going to do something that concerns the tribe. The Byraktor, you know, is the war chief; he is the one who leads the tribe to war. Shoshi is in blood with Shala, and Shala has sworn a *Besa* with the Tirana Government. We must think of all these things. Now I think that the Byraktor is also in blood with some of the tribes along the Kiri river, between here and Scutari. I think that he has hired you the mule so that he can travel in safety with you through those tribes and get to Scutari, where he will inquire about the Tirana Government, and whether it intends to join Shala in war against Shoshi. That is what I think."

I looked at that twelve-year-old lad in amazement and admiration. "Well, Rexh," I said humbly, "I must leave it to you to get me to Scutari to-night, somehow. You think the Byraktor intends to stop along the way?"

"Yes, Mrs. Lane. Also I think that the Shala man does not want to reach Scutari

"They made a living chain of themselves and the end man carried me across."

to-night. He swears earnestly, but I think he is a serpent with a forked tongue."

I sat there on the donkey, appalled. "But, Rexh, you know that I must get to Scutari to-night. Tell them I have said it. I am of the American tribe, and what Americans say they will do, they do. To-night I get to Scutari."

"Yes, Mrs. Lane. But one must not tell all one thinks. We will say nothing. We will see."

When the council was ended, we went on leisurely through the pass, and down into valleys, and up again over other mountains. At two o'clock we left behind the last glimpse of the wall of snow to the east, the last sight of the interior peaks of Northern Albania. At three o'clock we saw, glimmering on the far western horizon, the silvery edge of Lake Scutari, and far to the right, deep between two ranges, the valley of the tribe of Pultit, and the white house of the Bishop.

At four o'clock we began the tremendous descent into the Kiri valley, and I was obliged to dismount. "The gendarme says he cannot hold the donkey by the tail here, Mrs. Lane. He is afraid the tail will break."

For two miles we swung downward boulder by boulder, exhausting travel to the arms and shoulders, but the mountain women come up that way with cradles on their backs. The mule made it by little leaps.

"Now the road is good," said the Shala man, and indeed the two-foot path seemed a boulevard to me. Only twenty miles more to Scutari! And I thought of getting off the clothes in which I had slept for three nights, and a shampoo shone before me like a bright star. Rexh had been borrowing trouble, I thought; there was still light on the western slopes and twenty miles was nothing to these people. And just as I was thinking this the Byraktor halted.

"We will go this way, now," he said, "to the village where we stay to-night."

"Tell the Byraktor that I must get on to Scutari," I said. "I am sick and must get quickly to a doctor. I cannot stay in any village to-night; I must be with my own people."

"Yes, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh, and having talked for some time he explained, "I have told him that you have had word from your father, who is the chief of your tribe, and that the word said you must go to Durazzo and take a boat to your own country."

"Very well. What does he say?"

"He says that you stop in this village to-night. It is a good village and you will be rested in the morning."

"I will be in Scutari in the morning," I said. "Tell him again that I must go to Scutari. If he cannot go himself, will he let me take the mule?"

"But he says the roads are dangerous, and it will be dark."

"Tell him I am American, and there is no danger that stops an American."

The Byraktor looked at me, puzzled, but with a little humour in the depths of his dark eyes. He had put on his turban, below its white folds the silver chain dangled on his bare breast, above it the muzzle of his rifle caught a glint of the western sunlight.

MORE TROUBLE.

"He says it is not a question of your safety; it is a question of his honour. I was right, Mrs. Lane; he says that he is in blood with the tribes through which one goes to Scutari. If he travels through them by night, he will be killed, and in the darkness no one will know who has done it. He does not mind being killed, but to be killed by someone his tribe cannot know and kill afterward would be black dishonour to him. It is true, Mrs. Lane, and he is a great Byraktor, the Byraktor of five hundred houses."

"But he need not go with me. You and the Shala man will go with me. I only want his mule. Is he afraid for his mule? I will give him a paper, and if I am killed and the mule is stolen he can get another mule from the Red Cross house in Scutari."

I said this quite innocently, but the words taught me what blazing eyes are. One hears of them; one seldom sees them. But the Byraktor's eyes seemed actually to kindle into flame, and involuntarily I shrank back when he turned them on me.

"He does not think of the mule, Mrs. Lane. He thinks only of his honour. You must not say such things. He says you cannot go on without him; you are travelling under his protection, and it is his honour that is concerned if anything happens to you."

I looked at the ring of utterly savage-looking men, half naked, with shaven heads and scalp-locks, surrounding me in those wild mountains, and suddenly I struggled not to laugh. If a magic vision could have shown me then to my friends at home, how they would have prayed that I might escape alive! While the real difficulty was that these savages wanted only too embarrassingly to protect me.

"But Rexh, it is absurd. I did not ask for his protection; I simply hired his mule. Tell him that he has brought me so far safely, so far I have travelled under his protection, I thank him, I thank him deeply, I am most grateful with my whole heart, but now I will leave his protection and travel onward." And to Rexh's words, with my hand on my heart, I added in Albanian, "I thank you from my heart."

The Byraktor made a gesture, only a little gesture with his hand, but the violence of its fury I cannot describe. "You thank me! You have broken my honour!" he said, and

even without Rexh's murmured translation I would have felt the menace of the silence that followed.

"But," I said bewildered, "I am travelling with the Shala man. Isn't the Shala man protection? Besides, tell him I don't need protection, I am protected even here by the power of my own tribe."

"The Shala man shall take you in, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh. That too-handsome youth had hung back from the conversation, but Rexh's stern eye brought him into it. And then there was such a battle of words that the very rocks joined it. The Byraktor stood listening, bending down a little, intent; Rexh drove home with fist on chubby fist his earnest words, and the Shala man called heaven and the cliffs to witness his clamour. The Byraktor turned his eyes from Rexh to the Shala man, from the Shala man to Rexh, and thoughtfully stroked his chin. Around us the other men stood attentive.

The bridge over the Kiri River.

Then the Shala man turned and, lifting me from the trail to which I had dismounted, swung me again into the saddle. He pounded the saddle with his fist and exclaimed violently, his face congested with dark blood.

"It is all right, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh grimly. "He will take you in. He has told the Byraktor why he cannot take you into Scutari; it is because the gendarmes are looking for him to kill him. But he will take you in. After that, the gendarmes can have him; he is of no use."

Even my fixed idea was shaken by those astounding words.

"But, Rexh!" I said in horror, "I can't kill a man, even to get to Scutari to-night. Do you think the gendarmes will really kill him if he takes me in?" One glance at the violently miserable Shala man, however, answered the question.

"Yes, Mrs. Lane," said Rexh. "They will kill him by law, because he has killed some men. But Mrs. Lane, he said he would take you to Scutari, and he must take you to Scutari. The Byraktor will tell you so."

"Yes, yes," said the Byraktor, agreeing, and "Yes!" said the others, and looking at the Shala man I had no doubt that if he faltered on the way Rexh's tongue had barbs to drive him onward.

"But explain to the Byraktor that it is not American custom—that I can't take a man to be killed, Rexh. I'm sorry," said I, for it did seem a pity to disappoint Rexh so, when he had so nicely arranged everything. I leaned from the saddle and spoke earnestly to the Byraktor myself, Rexh's murmured translation for his ears while I held his eyes. "I must get to Scutari to-night. It is necessary. But I do not want to risk any man's life. I take my own life in my hands and go with it on the trail. No one else can carry it for me. That is American custom. It is American custom that I thank you now and give back to you your protection and go on alone. If it is not your custom, I am sorry, but by all American custom your honour is safe, and I am American, and Albanian law does not apply to me."

"You speak with a tongue of great learning," said the Byraktor, but this time his manner was sympathetic. "However, my honour is my honour, and my protection goes with you all the way to your own tribe. I will go with you to Scutari."

"But I don't want the Byraktor to be killed, either!" I wailed, and then the Byraktor's gendarme came forward. He was a low-browed, rascally looking fellow, naked except for the wide scarlet sash around his loins and the tiny white cap over his scalp-lock.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM.

"The honour of my Byraktor is my honour," he said. "My Byraktor is a good

Byraktor and a great Byraktor. If he is killed, all the valley mourns. If he is killed in the dark and we never know who kills him, so that we can kill that man, that is black dishonour for all the tribe of Shoshi. I am only one man, and if I am killed it does not matter. *I* will go with you to Scutari."

"Glory to your lips," said the others. "Good! It is decided."

"Well," I thought, "all this is beautiful rhetoric, but no one will kill him while I am with him." As for the danger in the darkness, I did not believe it for a moment. Who would shoot a person he could not see? So I said good-bye to the Byraktor—all our long and flowery speeches consumed another quarter of an hour, and the sunlight was climbing away over the mountains so rapidly that we could see it go—and I said good-bye to all the others, and promised the frantic Shala man that indeed he should be paid what had been promised, I would send him the money by the gendarme, and I would send the mule and the hundred kronen to the Byraktor—and then another difficulty rose. If I left the Shala man unprotected here, in the midst of the Shoshi men who had travelled amiably with him all that day, his life would be no safer than in the hands of the gendarmes of Scutari.

I actually felt despair when Rexh pointed this out. "Well, but he has to get back through the tribe of Shoshi somehow, anyway, hasn't he? Why on earth did he ever start this idiotic trip?"

"He wanted the money, Mrs. Lane, and he cannot think ahead. He came through Shoshi only for a joke. If he can get away alive from these men he can go back through Pultit."

"Well, ask the Byraktor if he will give me this Shala man's worthless life. Ask him not to let his men shoot him until after to-morrow night. Ask him if the Shala man may stay safely under the Byraktor's protection until the gendarme gets back with his money, and then go in peace."

So this was arranged, and the Shala man, turning his beautiful eyes most languishingly to mine, fervently kissed my hands in Italian fashion, and again I said good-bye to the Byraktor, and at last, just as the last sunlight left the mountains, Rexh, the gendarme, the mule and I continued our way toward Scutari.

We followed the winding trail along the banks of the Kiri River. Twilight was over the rushing waters and the cliffs, all along the way the trees were misty green with the youngest of new leaves, and the air was very pure and still. It was all peaceful and very beautiful, and lulled into dreaminess I leaned back in the wooden saddle, watching the first stars pricking through the sky. The only sounds were the little tinkling of the donkey's steel-plated hoofs upon the rocks, and the pouring, rushing noise of the Kiri. Mile after mile we went, the narrow canyon opening fresh vistas before us at every turn of the trail around the cliffs, and the twilight grew greyer, the stars brighter.

But we were coming down the river, out of the mountains, and a sudden shaft of pale sunlight striking a green hill on the other bank surprised me by announcing that the sun had not yet set on the Scutari plain. It was like coming into a new day. I sat up.

"Tired, Rexh?"

"No, Mrs. Lane."

"But you've been walking twelve hours! Sure you don't want to ride?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Lane. I am truly not tired."

"I think I'll walk awhile," said I, sliding down from the saddle. Even then he would not ride, but it was good to stretch tired muscles again, and hand in hand Rexh and I ran for some time along the almost level, winding trail, splashing through the little steams that crossed it, until suddenly Rexh stopped.

"We must not leave the gendarme behind, Mrs. Lane. Someone will shoot him."

"So they will!" said I. "Well, let's wait for him."

He overtook us, hurrying the mule with blows, and we fell in behind him, speculating now and then around which turn of the cliffs we would first see the Kiri bridge, that lovely succession of old stone arches, built long ago in the Italian style, and wondering what the girls in the Red Cross house would say when we so unexpectedly arrived.

NEARLY A TRAGEDY.

The crash of the thing that happened was like an explosion—over before one had time to comprehend it. I happened to be looking toward the gendarme, a couple of yards ahead of me, walking at the donkey's head, and I saw him reach for his rifle. A misty rain was falling; he had thrown my *poncho* over his shoulders, the strap that held his rifle ran under it. His gesture was quick and desperate. Some part of the rifle caught on a rent in the *poncho*, and the heavy oil-cloth ripped apart with a loud tearing sound. The frantic, struggling movement was printed on my eyeballs, and then, with headlong leaps, I had reached him; we stood beside a boulder that had blocked my view of the trail, and in front of us were two rifles, pointed straight at us!

There were two men behind the rifles, but I swear that I saw only the rifles. I flung out my hand and heard the most fluting feminine voice I have ever commanded crying: "Long life to you!" And then the rifles fired!

I have tried to give the effect of the thing as it happened; I may now say at once that

"Ask the Byraktor if he will give me this Shala man's worthless life."

I was not killed, though I shouldn't have been at all surprised if I had next realized that I was dead. Instead, I saw two very haughty and displeased Albanians advancing up the trail. "And to you, long life!" they said stiffly, and turned their heads from the gendarme as they passed him. When they were quite gone I was startled to find myself in a heap on the trail, weeping aloud like a six-year-old. It's odd how such things take you; I suppose it was the surprise of it.

The gendarme did not seem unduly excited. He said he had killed the cousin of one of those men not long before, and had been a little afraid of meeting him on this road. He said they had lifted their rifles when they saw me, and the bullets had gone over our heads. From now on, he added, if I did not mind, he would wear my hat as a disguise, because there were more of that man's relatives about. And would I mind walking beside him until we passed the Kiri bridge? He would then be out of the dangerous territory. As for my *poncho*, he was very sorry that he had torn it. I assured him that it did not matter.

I walked beside him all the way to the Kiri bridge, and then got on the wooden saddle again, and leaned back and rested. There was still an hour of travelling across the Scutari plain.

The sunlight faded from the silvering western sky, the western mountains were low dark shapes blotting out the stars. Far away a light twinkled on the citadel of Scutari. For a long time it was the only light in a vast darkness, and then the moon rose slowly above the snow peaks of the eastern mountains. The sky was the pale blue of a turquoise, flooded with creamy light, the lake of Scutari was a silver glimmer, like quicksilver spilled far out on the plain. All around us the tall spikes of yucca-blossoms stood vaguely creamy in the moonlight. We travelled over the silent land like ghosts, our shadows wavering uncertainly beside us.

The donkey walked with little, quick, indefatigable steps, the gendarme swung along easily, his rifle on his back, Rexh trudged beside me with his hand on the saddle. The soft earth let us pass without a sound.

"Tired, Rexh?"

"No, Mrs. Lane."

"What is the matter?"

"I am thinking that you will go away to your own country and forget us. You say you will come back to Albania, but you never will. It is easy to forget when one is far away; the mind changes. We will forget you, too. But I would like to keep this night, because it is a very beautiful night."

"Yes, Rexh, so would I."

The lights of Scutari were like scattered glow-worms among the trees. How strange it would be to come back into the twentieth century again!

THE END.

Looking down on the Lumi Shala from the mountain-tops.

THE ACID TEST.

WRITES a Canadian reader: "I like THE WIDE WORLD because it always 'delivers the goods.' Some magazines go all out for big names, and the big names don't always assay up to sample, but you set out to give good stuff, and invariably do it."

The test we apply, as our kind friend indicates, is the acid test of merit; anyone with a good true story to tell is sure of a hearing.

In this number we think you will specially like "The Rum-Runner," "The Disappearance of Annie Mooney," and "The Most Wonderful School in the World."

Old King Cole was a merry old soul
And a merry old soul was he,
He'd his pipe and his glass and his fiddlers three,
"But MAN AND HIS NEEDS beats the lot," said he.

The Editor

The remarkable contents-map of "The Wide World Magazine," showing the locality of every article and story in this splendid number.

"RUNNING TO THE FAT MEXICAN'S SIDE, HE YELLED 'GO!' AND KICKED THE HORSE WITH ALL HIS MIGHT."

(SEE PAGE 345.)

'TWIXT SUNSET AND SUNRISE

by

Hugh Thomason

ILLUSTRATED BY ERNEST PRATER

"Outside the large cities," writes the Author, "no foreigner's life is worth a farthing in Mexico. This story was told to me some months ago by Mr. William Bartle, a mining engineer, who guaranteed it to be absolutely true."

BARTLE pulled up his horse and looked back over the trail, where the crimson *serape* of his servant flamed amid the dusk of the mesquite.

José was muffled deep in his blanket, and his great toppling sombrero was drawn low over his brow. He shadowed his master along the dimming trail in the fashion of an assassin.

"Man," said Bartle, in lame Mexican, as the servant drew near, "I want eat! I want sleep! Understand? Quickly! Understand?"

"*Si, señor,*" said José, nodding. He stretched one arm out of his blanket, and pointed a yellow finger into the gloom. "Over there, small village! *Si, señor.*"

They rode forward again. Once the American's horse shied and quivered at something which he saw or imagined in the darkness, and the rider drew a steady, patient rein, and leaned over to speak tenderly to the animal, as if he were addressing a frightened woman. The sky had faded to white over the mountains, and the plain was a vast, pointless ocean of black.

Suddenly some low houses appeared squatting amid the bushes. The horsemen rode into a hollow until the houses rose against the sombre sundown sky, and then up a small hillock, causing the habitations to sink like boats in the sea of shadow.

A beam of red firelight fell across the trail. Bartle sat sleepily on his horse while the servant quarrelled with somebody—a mere voice in the gloom—over the price of bed and board. The houses about him were for the most part like tombs in their whiteness and silence, but there were scudding black figures that seemed interested in his arrival.

José came at last to the horses' heads, and the American slid stiffly from his seat. He muttered a greeting as, with his spurred boots, he clicked into the *adobe* house that confronted him. The brown, stolid face of a woman shone in the light of the fire. Bartle seated himself on the earthen floor and blinked drowsily at the blaze, vaguely aware that the woman was clinking earthenware and moving here and there preparing a meal. From a dark corner of the room there came the sound of two or three people's snores.

Presently the woman handed him a bowl of *tortillas*. She was a submissive-looking creature, timid and large-eyed. She gazed at his enormous silver spurs, his large and impressive Colt automatic, with interest and admiration. When he ate, she watched him from the gloom, her white teeth shining.

José entered, staggering under the load of two huge Mexican saddles. Bartle decided to smoke a cigarette and then changed his mind; it would be much better to go to sleep. His blanket hung over his left shoulder, rolled into a long pipe, according to a Mexican fashion. By doffing his sombrero and unfastening his spurs and his pistol belt, he made himself ready for the slow, blissful twist into the blanket. Like a cautious man, he lay close to the wall, and all his property was very near his hand.

The mesquite brush on the hearth burned low. José threw gigantic wings of shadow as he flapped his blanket about him—first across his chest under his arms, and then around his neck and across his chest again,

this time over his arms, with the end tossed on his right shoulder. A Mexican thus snugly enveloped can nevertheless free his fighting arm instantly, merely shrugging his shoulder as he grabs for the weapon at his belt. They always wear their *serapes* in this manner.

The firelight smothered the rays which, streaming from a moon as large as a drum-head, were struggling in at the open door. Bartle heard from the plain the fine, rhythmical trample of the hoofs of hurried horses. He went to sleep wondering who rode so fast and so late. In the deep silence, when the fire died down, the pale rays of the moon stole in until the room was flooded to its middle with a rectangle of silver light.

Bartle was awakened by the sound of a guitar, very badly played. A noise of shuffling feet accompanied the music. Sometimes laughter arose, and often the voices of men saying bitter things to each other; but always the guitar twanged on.

"Confound it! They're having a dance!" muttered Bartle, fretfully. He heard two men quarrelling in short, sharp words like pistol shots; they were calling each other dreadful names.

He wondered why the noise was so loud. Raising his head from his saddle pillow he saw, with the help of the moonbeams, a blanket hanging flat against the wall at the farther end of the room. Being of the opinion that it concealed a door, and remembering that Mexican liquor made men very drunk, he pulled his automatic closer to him and prepared for sudden disaster.

"Well, I will kill him, then!"

"No, you must not!"

"Yes, I will kill him! Listen! I will ask this American beast for his beautiful pistol and spurs and money and saddle, and if he will not give them—you will see!"

"But these Americans—they are a strange people. Look out, señor."

Then twenty voices took part in the discussion. They rose in quivering shrillness as from men badly drunk.

Bartle felt the skin draw tight around his mouth, and his knee-joints went limp. Slowly he came to a sitting posture, glaring at the motionless blanket at the far end of the room. The tumultuous emotions of his terror destroyed that slow and careful process of thought by means of which he understood Mexican. He could not follow the words, but he used his instinctive comprehension of the first and universal language—tone. Still, it is disheartening not to be able to understand the details of threats against one's life.

Suddenly the clamour of voices ceased. There was a silence—the silence of decision. The blanket was flung aside, and the red light of a torch flared into the room. It was held high by a fat, round-faced Mexican, whose snake-like little moustache was as black as his eyes. He was insane with the wild rage of a man with liquor burning in his brain. Five or six of his friends crowded after him. The guitar, which had been thrummed doggedly during the dispute, now stopped suddenly.

Bartle and the intruder contemplated each other. Bartle sat very straight and still, his right hand lost in the folds of his blanket. The Mexicans jostled in the light of the torch, their eyes blinking and glittering.

The fat man posed in the manner of a grandee. Presently his hand dropped to his belt, and from his lips there shot an epithet—a hideous word which often foreshadows knife-blows, a word peculiarly Mexican.

The American did not move. He was staring at the fat Mexican with a strange fixedness of gaze—not fearful, not dauntless, not anything that could be interpreted; he simply stared.

The fat Mexican must have been disconcerted, for he continued to pose as a grandee, with more and more sublimity, until it would have been easy for him to have fallen over backward. His companions were swaying in a very drunken manner. They still blinked their beady eyes at Bartle. Here was a mystery. At the approach of their menacing company, why did not this American cry out and turn pale, or run, or pray for mercy? The animal merely sat still, and stared, and waited for them to begin. Well, evidently he was a great fighter; or perhaps he was an idiot. Indeed, this was an embarrassing situation, for who was going to risk stepping forward to discover whether he was a great fighter or merely an idiot?

To Bartle, whose nerves were tingling and twitching like live wires, and whose heart hammered inside him, this pause was a long horror; and for these men who could so frighten him there began to swell in him a fierce hatred—a hatred that made him long to kill the lot of them. A 45-calibre Colt automatic can make a hole large enough for a woodpecker to build a nest in, and there was a certain fat Mexican, with a moustache like a snake, who came extremely near death merely because he frightened a man too much.

José had slept the first part of the night in his own fashion, his body hunched up into a heap, his legs crooked, his head touching his knees. Shadows had hitherto obscured him from the sight of the invaders. At this point, however, he arose, and began to prowl timidly over toward Bartle, as if he meant to hide behind him.

Suddenly the fat Mexican gave a howl of glee. José had come within the torch's circle of light. With roars of singular ferocity the whole group of Mexicans pounced on the American's servant.

He shrank away from them shuddering,

beseeching mercy by every device of word and gesture. Highly delighted, they pushed him this way and that, they struck him with their fists, they stung him with their curses. As he grovelled on his knees, the fat Mexican took him by the throat and cried: "I'm going to kill you!" And continually they turned their eyes to see if they were going to succeed in causing the American to make the first move.

Bartle looked on impassively. Under the blanket, however, his fingers were clenched as rigidly as iron upon the handle of his automatic.

Suddenly two brilliant clashing chords from the guitar were heard, and a woman's voice, full of laughter and confidence, cried from outside: "Hello! hello! Where are you?"

The lurching company of Mexicans instantly paused and looked at the ground. "It is the girls! They have come!" said one, as he stood with his legs wide apart in order to balance himself. He screamed an answer to the question of the woman: "Here!" Without waiting, he turned back to the blanket-covered door. One could now hear a number of female voices giggling and chattering.

"Yes, it is the girls! Yes!" said two others, and they also turned quietly away. Even the fat Mexican's ferocity seemed to be affected. He looked uncertainly at the still immovable American. Two of his friends grasped him gaily. "Come, the girls are here!" they cried. "Come!" He cast another scowl at Bartle. "But this——" he began. Laughing, his comrades hustled him towards the door. On its threshold, holding back the blanket with one hand, he turned his yellow face with a last challenging glare toward the American. José, wailing in little sobs of utter despair and woe, crept to Bartle and huddled near his knee. Then the cries of the Mexicans meeting the girls were heard, and the guitar burst out in joyous humming.

The moon clouded and but a faint oblong of light fell through the open door of the house. The fire had died down. Bartle did not change his position, but remained staring at the blanket which hid the door. At his knees José was arguing, in a low, aggrieved tone, with the saints. Outside, the Mexicans laughed and danced, and—as would appear from the sounds—drank deep and long.

In the stillness of the night Bartle sat wondering if some serpent-like Mexican was sliding toward him in the darkness, and if the first thing he knew of it would be the deadly sting of the knife. "Sssh!" he whispered to José; then he drew his pistol from under his blanket and held it on his leg.

The blanket over the door fascinated him. It was a vague form, black and unmoving. Through the opening it shielded was to come, probably, menace and death. Sometimes he thought he saw it move.

Bartle longed to bolt, but in this threatening gloom his terror convinced him that a move on his part would be a signal for the pounce of death. José, crouching abjectly at his knee, occasionally mumbled. Slowly and ponderous as the stars the minutes went by.

Suddenly Bartle thrilled and started. While he nodded on the brink of sleep his nerveless fingers had allowed his pistol to fall and clang upon the hard floor. He grabbed it up hastily, and his glance swept apprehensively over the room.

The chill blue light of dawn was in the room. Every outline was slowly growing; detail was following detail. The dread blanket did not move. The riotous company had gone or become silent.

Bartle felt his nerve returning with the light. He touched José. "Come," he said. His servant lifted his lined, yellow face and comprehended. Bartle buckled on his spurs and stood up; José obediently lifted the two great saddles. Bartle held two bridles and a blanket on his left arm; in his right hand he gripped his pistol. They stole toward the door.

Bartle was inexpressibly shocked when he came to walk. The clinking of his spurs sounded like a pair of cymbals.

On the threshold Bartle looked back. In a corner, watching him with large eyes, he saw the Indian man and woman who had been his hosts. Throughout the night they had made no sign, and now they neither spoke nor moved. Yet Bartle thought he detected meek satisfaction at his departure.

The street outside was still and deserted. In the eastern sky there was a lemon-coloured patch.

José had picketed the horses at the side of the house, and as the two men came round the corner, Bartle's animal set up a whinny of welcome. The little horse had evidently heard them coming. He stood facing them, his ears cocked forward, his eyes bright with welcome.

Bartle made a frantic gesture, but the horse, in his happiness at the appearance of his friends, whinnied again with enthusiasm.

At that moment the American felt he could have strangled his well-beloved steed! Upon the threshold of safety he was being betrayed by his horse! And yet, as he glanced wildly about him, he could see nothing stirring in the street, nor at the doors of the tomb-like houses.

José had his own saddle-girth and both bridles on in a moment, and he curled up the picket-ropes with a few sweeps of his arm. The fingers of Bartle, however, were shaking so that he could hardly tie the *latigo* strap of his *cincha*.

Presently he swung into the saddle, and as he did so his horse made a mad jump forward.

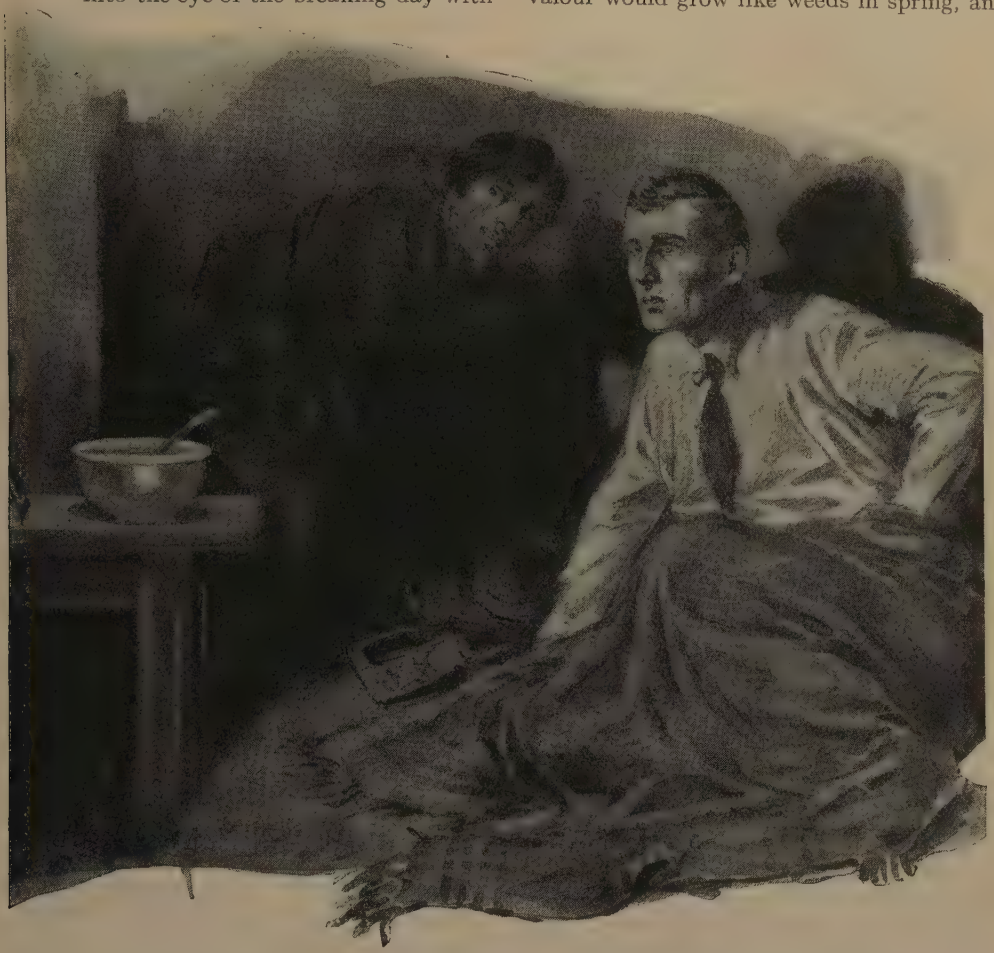
"Bartle and the intruder contemplated each other. . . . Presently the fat man's hand dropped to his belt, and from his lips there shot an epithet."

The spurs of José scratched the flanks of his great black animal, and side by side the pair raced down the village street. The American heard his horse breathe a quivering sigh of excitement.

The houses of the town glided past in a moment, and the great, clear, silent plain appeared like a pale blue sea of mist and wet bushes. Above the mountains the colours of the sunrise began to flame.

The American looked down at his horse.

He felt in his heart the first thrill of confidence. The little animal, unurged and quite tranquil, moving his ears this way and that, was nevertheless bounding into the eye of the breaking day with



the speed of a frightened antelope. Bartle, looking down, saw the long, fine reach of fore limb as steady as steel machinery. As the ground reeled past, the long, dry grass hissed, and cactus-plants were dull blurs. A wind whirled the horse's mane over the rider's bridle-hand.

José's profile was lined against the pale sky. It was that of a man who swims alone in an ocean. His eyes glinted like metal, fastened on some unknown point ahead of him, some mystic place of safety. Occasionally his mouth puckered in a little unheard cry; and his legs, bent back, worked spasmodically as his spurred heels hammered the flanks of his charger.

Bartle consulted the gloom in the west for signs of a hard-riding, yelling cavalcade. He knew that whereas his friends the enemy had not attacked him when he had sat still and confronted them with apparent calmness, they would certainly take after him furiously now that he had run from them—now that he had confessed he was the weaker. Their valour would grow like weeds in spring, and upon discovering his escape they would ride forth dauntless warriors.

Sometimes he was sure he saw them, sometimes he was sure he heard them. Continually looking backward over his shoulder, he studied the purple expanses where the night was marching away. José rolled and shuddered in his saddle, persistently disturbing the stride of the black horse.

At last Bartle drew his mount carefully down to a walk. José wished to rush insanely on, but the American spoke to him sternly. As the two paced forward side by side, Bartle's little horse thrust out his soft nose and inquired into the black's condition.

Riding with José was like riding with a corpse. His face resembled a cast in lead. Sometimes he swung forward and almost pitched from his seat. Bartle was too

frightened himself to do anything but hate this man for his fear. Finally he issued a mandate which nearly caused José's eyes to slide out of his head.

"Ride behind me—about fifty paces," he commanded.

"Señor——" stuttered the servant.

"Go!" cried the American furiously. He glared at the other and laid his hand on his automatic. José looked at his master wildly. He made a piteous gesture. Then, slowly, he fell back, watching the hard face of the American for a sign of mercy.

Bartle had resolved in his rage that at any rate he was going to use the eyes and ears of extreme fear to detect the approach of danger; and so he established his servant as a sort of rear-guard.

As they proceeded he was obliged to watch sharply to see that the servant did not slink forward and join him. When José made beseeching circles in the air with his arm he replied by gripping his pistol.

José had a revolver; nevertheless it was very clear in his mind that the revolver was distinctly an American weapon. He had been educated in the Rio Grande country.

Bartle lost the trail once, but was recalled to it by the loud sobs of his servant.

Then, at last, José came clattering forward, gesticulating and wailing. The little horse sprang to the shoulder of the black. They were off.

Bartle, looking back, could see a slanting flare of dust on the whitening plain. He thought that he could detect small moving figures in it.

José's moans and cries amounted to a university course in theology. They broke continually from his quivering lips. He forced the black horse over the plain in great headlong leaps

But under Bartle there was a little insignificant-looking rat-coloured beast that was running apparently without effort. As a matter of truth, the ground seemed merely something to be touched from time to time with hoofs that were as light as blown leaves. Occasionally Bartle lay back and pulled stoutly on his bridle to keep from abandoning his servant.

Crimson *serapes* now appeared in the distance, resembling drops of blood on the great cloth of the plain.

Bartle began to dream of the coming battle. Although quite a humane man, he did not once think of his servant. José being a Mexican, it was natural that he should be killed in Mexico; but for himself, a New Yorker——

From the rear now there could be heard yelling, and presently a volley of shots. The bullets came whining through the air overhead, and Bartle moaned as he looked back. He kept his hand on his automatic. He tried to imagine the brief tumult of his capture—the flurry of dust from the hoofs of horses pulled suddenly to their haunches, the shrill biting curses of the men, the ring of the shots, his own last struggles. He wondered if he could not somehow manage to kill that fat Mexican, just to cure his abominable egotism.

It was José, the terror-stricken, who at last discovered safety. Suddenly he gave a howl of delight, astonishing his labouring horse into a new burst of speed. They were on a little ridge at the time, and the American, reaching the top of it, saw his servant gallop down the slope and into the arms, so to speak, of a small column of Obregon's cavalry, dressed in a uniform of grey and silver. In the dim light of early morning they were as vague as shadows, but Bartle knew them at once for a detachment of Rurales, that crack cavalry corps of the Mexican Army which polices the plains so zealously—a fierce and swift-moving body that knows little of prevention, but much of vengeance. They drew up suddenly, and the rows of great silver-trimmed sombreros bobbed in surprise.

Bartle saw José throw himself from his horse and begin to jabber at the leader of the party. When he arrived he found that his servant had already outlined the entire situation, and was engaged in describing him, Bartle, as an American señor of vast wealth, who was the friend of almost every governmental potentate within two hundred miles. This seemed to profoundly impress the officer. He bowed gravely to Bartle and smiled significantly at his men, who unslung their carbines.

The little ridge hid the yelling pursuers from view, but the rapid thud of their horses' feet could be heard. Occasionally they called and shouted to one another.

Then at last they swept over the brow of the hill, a wild mob of almost fifty drunken horsemen. When they discerned the pale-uniformed Rurales they were sailing down the slope at top speed.

If toboggans halfway down a hill should suddenly make up their minds to turn around and go back, there would be an effect somewhat like that now produced on the drunken horsemen. Bartle saw the Rurales serenely swing their carbines forward, and, peculiar-minded person that he was, felt his heart leap into his throat at the prospective volley. But the officer rode forward alone.

It appeared that the man who owned the best horse in this astonished company was the fat Mexican with the snaky moustache, and, in consequence, this gentleman was quite a distance in the lead. He tried to pull up, wheel his horse, and scuttle back over the hill as some of his companions had done, but the officer called to him in a voice harsh with rage.

"Dog!" howled the officer. "This señor is my friend, the friend of my friends. Do

you dare pursue him, you ——! ——! ——! ——! ——! ——!" These lines represent terrible names, unprintable names, used by the officer.

The fat Mexican simply grovelled on his saddle. Nevertheless he was allowed to vanish in a cloud of yellow dust at the ridge-top.

José was exultant, defiant, and—now that the danger was over—bristling with

"Side by side the two horses raced down the village street."

horse's neck. His face was green; it could be seen that he expected death.

The officer stormed on with magnificent intensity.

Finally he sprang from his saddle, and, running to the fat Mexican's side, yelled: "Go!" and kicked the horse with all his might. The animal gave a mighty leap into the air, and the fat Mexican, with one wretched glance at the contemplative Rurales, aimed his terrified steed for the top of the ridge. Bartle gulped again in expectation of a volley. The fat Mexican also thought that he was to be killed while on the run, for he cringed fearfully in his courage. The black horse was drooping sadly, his nose to the ground, but Bartle's little animal, with his ears bent forward, was staring at the horses of the Rurales as if studying them. Bartle longed for speech, but he could only bend forward and pat the shining, silken shoulders. The little horse turned his head and looked back gravely.

Only one thought occurred to Bartle. He was safe, but if this incident had happened in the days of Porfirio Diaz the Rurales would have shot the fat Mexican and all his companions. Evidently times had changed.

The CANNIBAL ISLANDS

By CLIFFORD W. COLLINSON, F.R.G.S.

Mr. H. A. Markham, whose isolated trading station the Author visited.

The first sight of the tops of the coconut palms on Ong-Tong-Java.

A series of articles which our readers will find particularly interesting. Mr. Collinson has spent several years in the Solomons, a strikingly beautiful group where, in the unexplored interior of the larger islands, cannibalism and head-hunting are still practised, and many tribes have never set eyes on a white man. In this instalment Mr. Collinson describes his visit to the little-known *atolls* of Ong-Tong-Java.

II.

THE Solomon Islands are sufficiently remote from civilization and regular lines of travel to satisfy the most earnest seeker after adventure and the keenest searcher for the wild and primitive. In comparison with some of the lonely *atolls* in the Pacific, however, they are fashionable places of resort.

During my voyage from Sydney to Tulagi, the seat of Government of the Solomons, I made the acquaintance of Mr. Harold A. Markham, the story of whose life would furnish a volume full of action and romance. Originally a native of Kettering, he had been in turn a lumberman in Nova Scotia, a P. and O. quartermaster, a member of the Johannesburg Fire Brigade, and a trooper in the South African War. Now, in the prime of life, he owns plantations in the Solomons and lives, for a considerable part of the year, all alone on a tiny coral *atoll* two hundred miles from his nearest white neighbour. Markham and I became very friendly, and when he suggested that I should accompany him to his isolated trading station on a two months' visit, I at once accepted.

In my previous article I referred to the

sudden, breath-taking invitations that are such a delightful feature of life "down under"; but it is one thing to join a party of congenial companions and quite another to strike out alone "into the blue," with a fellow you have only known for a week, with the knowledge that for more than two months the pair of you will be entirely alone, cut off by hundreds of miles of ocean from other white men. I hesitated not a moment, however, having no fear of "temperamental incompatibility" and being only too eager to seize this exceptional opportunity of visiting a place and a people almost unknown and unvisited even by old-timers in the Solomons.

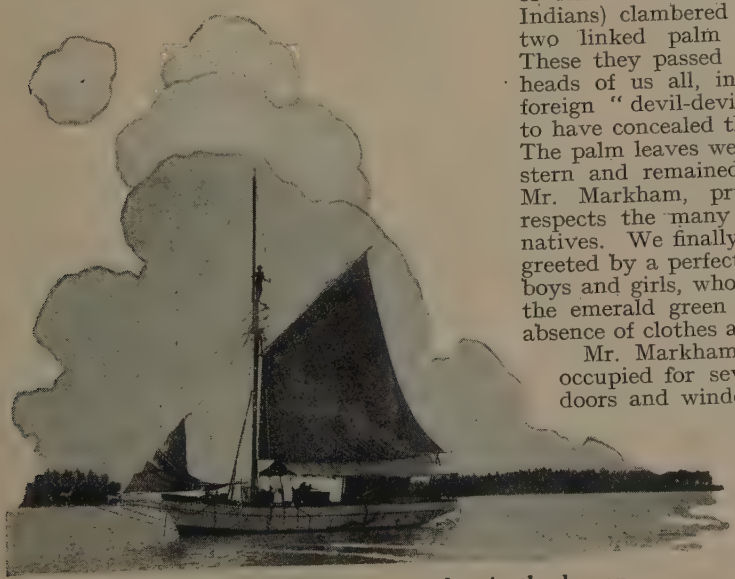
Behold me, then, in the pearly dawn, transferring my bags from the steamer, as she lay at anchor in Rendova Harbour, to Mr. Markham's fifteen-ton auxiliary ketch, *Lily*, as she curtsied and sidled at the foot of the accommodation ladder.

When we got away at last and breasted the great surges of the open Pacific the ketch appeared extraordinarily small to me, but nevertheless she "chug-chugged" gallantly away on her long northward trip Equatorwards across the open sea. Our objective was the ring of coral *atolls* named Ong-Tong-Java, which lie in latitude 3° 29′ 30″ S., and longitude 159° 42′ E. These tiny *atolls* are connected by half-submerged coral reefs and form an oval ring enclosing a lagoon forty miles long and eighteen miles wide. Leueneua is the largest *atoll*, and it is on this island that Mr. Markham lives and trades in solitary grandeur. Some years ago, Houdini, of handcuff fame, chancing to hear of Mr. Markham's isolation, appealed to the American public to send periodicals and newspapers to this ocean hermit. The result was that on his next visit to the comparative civilization of the Solomons, Mr. Markham was astonished to find no less than *eight bags* of mail awaiting him! Mr. Jackson, the overworked Postmaster at Tulagi, had emphatic views on the subject! Subsequent mails were no less prodigious, and though the incident happened a long time ago, Mr. Markham still keeps up correspondence with the more enduring of his unseen postal friends.

We passed that ocean death-trap, the terrible Roncador Reef, one starry midnight, and heard its breakers roaring menacingly. Thereafter we breathed more freely, for the currents that sweep up and down these uncharted sea-ways are so unaccountable that even the most careful navigator cannot pilot his course to within twenty miles with a small-powered boat. At dawn on the third day we sighted the tops of the coconut palms of Ong-Tong-Java and presently sailed into the great lagoon through one of the only two deep-water passages in its entire circumference. There is no land on any of these *atolls* more than about twenty feet above sea level.

As the *Lily* glided into the glass-calm waters of the lagoon great activity was manifest on the white coral beach of Leueneua, and when our anchor rumbled down in the shoal water and the gallant little engine slackened to a standstill after two days and three nights of continuous running, we were surrounded by flimsy outrigger canoes crowded with brown-skinned humanity. Before any ordinary native was permitted to board us, two local "devil-devil" priests (similar to the witch-doctors of Africa and the medicine men of the Indians) clambered over the stern, holding two linked palm leaves between them. These they passed over the decks and the heads of us all, in order to exorcise any foreign "devil-devils" that might chance to have concealed themselves on the vessel. The palm leaves were finally hung over the stern and remained there for many days. Mr. Markham, prudent fellow, carefully respects the many quaint customs of the natives. We finally rowed ashore and were greeted by a perfect swarm of naked brown boys and girls, who capered and laughed in the emerald green shallows with an equal absence of clothes and shyness.

Mr. Markham's house had been unoccupied for several weeks, but though doors and windows had been left open during the whole period, not a thing had been touched or disturbed, notwithstanding the fact that his bungalow is in the middle of the houses of the native village. That is one



Mr. Markham's cutter *Lily* at anchor in the lagoon.

of the charms of living in these "savage" places; petty theft is practically unknown. Makers of locks, bolts, and bars do not sell many of their wares in the Solomons.

It is impossible in the space of a short article to deal in any detail with the fascinating life and customs of this isolated and practically unknown ring of *atolls*. I shall have to be content with just a few vignettes, as it were, of incidents that occurred during the many weeks I spent on these idyllic isles.

Palau Island, a much smaller *atoll* than Leueneua, is situated at the north-western limit of the lagoon, and we reached it after a run of about thirty-six miles. The white surges of the Pacific were roaring on the outer side of the reefs, but inside the lagoon the water was perfectly unruffled.

Mr. Markham went ashore first in the dinghy with his boxes of "trade" goods, and then sent the boat back for me. I took the remainder of the goods ashore and joined him under the shade of the palms. Here I was introduced to King Pongovali, the local ruler, a stout, very consequential, and important personage clad in a white singlet and cotton *lava-lava*. Seats (on wooden cases) were provided for the king, Mr. Markham, and myself, and the trading began.

We were seated under a small group of coconut palms at the extreme end of the island. Between us and the village, the roofs of which could be seen amongst the palms covering the rest of the island, was a wide grassy clearing. This clearing was some three hundred yards in extent, and across it streamed the men and women, bearing on their shoulders or carrying in their arms strings of copra.

All the natives—the children as well—were wearing *lava-lavas*, some of them brilliant reds, yellows, and greens, and the effect against their velvet brown skins, with the background of vivid green palms, blue sky, blue sea, and creaming surf, was just a gorgeous feast of colour.

The Palau islanders, owing to the way in which they have absorbed all that is worst and failed to assimilate the best of civilized ideas, are the most deplorable in the whole group for rapacity and general turpitude. There were about two hundred and fifty of them assembled, and they gathered in a semi-circle, squatting on the grass. Mr. Markham proceeded to exhibit his goods—sticks of tobacco, wax vestas, clay pipes, fish hooks, *lava-lavas*, whistles, penknives, bars of soap, diving goggles, pipes, singlets, fish lines, and other articles. Over half a ton of biscuits, which had been ordered by the king previously, were ferried ashore and traded for thirty thousand coconuts. I booked the number of coconuts received whilst Mr. Markham handed out the goods, and the pile of nuts steadily grew.

I took a few snapshots of groups of natives, including one of some young girls, among whom was an albino with skin as white as that of any European. I also photographed the king, his brother, and his Prime Minister.

Trade was very brisk, mostly for matches and tobacco; the king paid three thousand five hundred nuts for a fifteen-pound case of tobacco. Our boat-boys carted the copra to the dinghy and made several trips out to the *Lily* with it. In about three hours we had exchanged goods to the value of about fifteen thousand coconuts, all of which were paid over, leaving unpaid the thirty thousand for the biscuits. As the sun fell so the trade declined, and at ebb-tide we made our departure, wading out to the dinghy through ripples that gleamed like liquid opal beneath the gorgeous hues of the sunset. Soon the swift darkness fell and the *Lily* rocked sleepily on waters that reflected the blazing stars above, while from the beach came the faint sounds of village life and the intermittent flash of torches between the trees.

Awake at dawn, we set off to a coral reef on the south-western boundary of the lagoon, an hour's run—about five miles. We anchored close to the reef, part of which was already clear of the ebbing tide, the breakers of the Pacific smoking on the outer edge. It was a glorious cloudless day, already—at 7 a.m.—very hot. We rowed to the edge of the emerald-green shoal, jumped out into about two feet of water, and waded along to the dry portion over lumps and boulders of brown coral. We were clad in short knickers, open-necked shirts, and leather boots to save our feet from the sharp coral. The thirteen Kanakas with us were in their scanty loin-cloths and had bare feet. We searched systematically for trochas pearl-shell, a spiral, cone-shaped shell about four inches high and the same across the base when full grown. The bulk of the shell, being mother-of-pearl, is used for shirt buttons, and similar articles, and at the time of which I speak fetched about £120 per ton. They are fairly plentiful, being found mostly on the underside of coral boulders in a pool.

One constantly comes across trochas shells which are inhabited by the hermit crab and, being "dead shell," are not often worth picking up. As we walked along the reefs (the going being very rough), putting our shell into the bags which each of us carried, my attention was constantly attracted by the swarming life of the pools—tiny fishes of brilliant hues, black and white striped ones, and dark blue starfish, the sprawling arms of which measured over a foot across. There were also sea-snakes or eels of a transparent grey, flashing sinuously under the protection of a coral slab, and millions of little creatures of various types darting away at the first splash of my foot in the

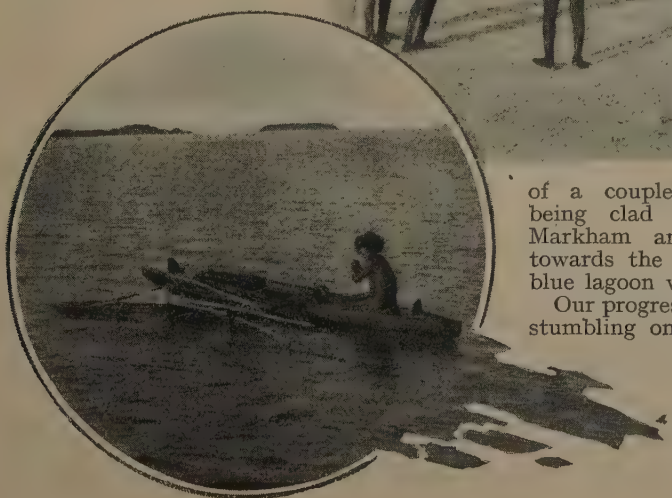
Mr. Markham's bungalow in the shade of the palms.

pools. The coral, too, was bewildering in its variety of colour—branching coral, mushroom coral, volcanic coral, grey and smooth, coral mottled with pink, purple and red lichens and little pink bunches of thread-like seaweed. Each pool was a wonderland of vivid colour and teeming tropical marine life.

After two hours' search the fuller note of the surf and the steadily decreasing area of submerged reef warned us that we must regain the *Lily* without further delay. We therefore deposited our catch on an adjacent *atoll*, drank the milk out of a couple of coconuts—the tiny *atoll* being clad with palms—and then Mr. Markham and I set off to walk back towards the *Lily*, lying motionless on the blue lagoon water.

King Pongovali, the local ruler, with his brother and Prime Minister.

Native youngsters on the beach.



Our progress was a somewhat arduous and stumbling one through the rapidly-deepening water, which was now

A typical outrigger canoe.

running in a fast current from the sea into the lagoon across the reef. In crossing a deep channel that took us up to our thighs a sudden swirl and flurry in the streaming water revealed to us the sinuous brown form of a small shark which was hastening with the current into the lagoon. It turned towards Mr. Markham, but thought better of it, and flashed away again through the crystal water. We scrambled into the dinghy and were soon aboard the *Lily* again, smoking comfortably at our ease beneath the grateful shade of the awning.

On Leueneua, one moonlit night, sleep being quite impossible owing to the tremendous din of the dancing and the beating of the tom-toms, I got up about midnight and stole through the palms clad only in a *lava-lava*. From behind a palm-trunk I gazed on a scene seldom witnessed by a white man, and one that might be expected to be associated only with an elaborately-staged spectacular play. Squatting in a rough square were women, girls, and children, the nearest silhouetted black and stark against the concealed glow of the torches, while the other two sides and the one facing me were alternately revealed in high lights and then thrown into deep shadow by the flickering glimmer. Above them the drooping leaves and ringed trunks of the palm trees glowed orange.

In the middle of the square was a packed group of men dancing vigorously to the monotonous and unending two-note chant of the women, one of whom beat stridently on a native wooden drum. The dances were short ones, and followed each other almost without a break. First would come the chant of the women in fairly slow time, while the men advanced from one corner towards the centre. Then the music quickened and the tom-tom went at full speed, the dance increasing in rapidity in sympathy and the men giving vent to "Hi-hi's" in unison. With knees turned outwards they did a sliding movement in a mass across the ring—very quick steps on alternate feet, the body motionless—then back again, followed by swift stabbing motions to right and left with their spears. Quicker and quicker went the music and the clapping and the dance till it suddenly terminated with a shout and the dancers retired again into the darkness. Almost immediately the slow chant was begun again, the tom-tom started beating, and they were at it once more.

I watched motionless for some time and two naked boys, not seeing me, came and stood close by. Unfortunately I raised my hand to look at my watch, the luminous dial of which shone green and ghostly in the darkness. One of the boys caught sight of this glowing circle floating upwards, and with a howl of dismay dashed off through the palms. The dance and the music stopped dead, and thinking that explanations might be difficult, I crept silently away from the scene and regained Mr. Markham's bungalow. In a few moments the singing recommenced and they were dancing again.

We had beached the *Lily* in order to scrape and cleanse her coppered hull, and whilst this was in process word was brought that a shoal of Bhoma fish had been seen off the next island. With ten excited natives I got into the launch and went along to the place. We threw in a dynamite cartridge and immediately there was a great upheaval of water and fish. Overboard into the lagoon went the natives, and after collecting the stunned fish on the surface they dived through the crystal-clear water after those lying at the bottom. They picked up a hundred and fourteen fish and then we made for our landing place. As we approached it the almost horizontal rays of the setting sun behind us threw into vivid contrast the olive green of the palms, the snow-white beach, and the delicious brown colouring of the naked natives, who crowded down to the edge of the lagoon to meet us as we landed. Our share of the fish went into the frying pan, and we soon disposed of a couple each—delicious firm flesh, too. The natives made a fire in a little open space near the house, on the glowing embers of which they cooked the rest of the catch.

The marriage customs of the natives in Leueneua are especially interesting. In the case of the more important members of the community a boy and girl are pledged to each other in their infancy—sometimes even before they are born, the latter arrangement depending for its fulfilment, of course, upon the suitability of their sex when they arrive. When the boy reaches the age when he can go fishing all his catches go to his intended's parents, none to his own.

The pledged boy and girl are not permitted to associate in any way during adolescence. I have often seen a couple of youngsters catch sight of one another and immediately turn aside so as not to meet.

The girl is tattooed from the waist to the knees at about the age of thirteen or fourteen, and when a festival comes along she parades with the other young girls quite naked, covered with bright yellow paint and wearing leaf garlands. This happens for several festivals until she is deemed ready for marriage. A few days before the next festival she again parades, naked except for a thick coating of red and yellow paint, and makes for the "devil-devil" house. Here the young bachelors dash forward and scrape off portions of the paint with palm leaves to retain as souvenirs. That night her husband comes to her hut, where are gathered also the parents of both bride and bridegroom. Next day the bride again parades, but now she wears a *lava-lava*. The young couple do not set up house-

keeping together until the wife presents her husband with a baby; the bride continues to live in her parents' house, the husband only visiting her by stealth at night.

In the case of more humble people betrothals at an early age are not insisted upon. When a boy fancies a girl (or *vice versa*) he grasps her wrist in a special manner during the moonlight games on the beach and, if the other be agreeable, the marriage takes place in the bride's house without further delay. A man may have as many wives as he cares to provide for, but as the natives are incurably lazy monogamy is the rule.

Of the tattooing customs, the unique native graveyards with their carved coral headstones, the three years' mourning penance of bereaved widows, the quaint burial customs, and the still more remarkable "devil-devil" rites and observances, I have unfortunately no space to write. Nor can I describe the strutting and attitudinizing of the vain young bucks, with their mirrors and combs, the extraordinary eugenic marriage laws, the dances of the maidens on the moonlit beaches, and all the fascinating and romantic lure of this unknown Paradise of the South Seas. In all the world, however, there is, in my humble opinion, no place that merits more than Ong-Tong-Java the title of "The Isles of Enchantment."

In addition to their other attractions, they provide a useful source of income, for the *atolls* are thickly planted with coconuts and furnish a steady supply of copra, or dried nut, which the natives exchange for various articles of commerce that Mr. Markham brings periodically from the Solomons. Native trading throughout the Islands simply consists in this exchange of goods for copra—sometimes, as I described in regard to Palau, an actual "cash" transaction, but more frequently a "book debt." The natives themselves, of course, keep no written record of the state of their accounts, but it is extraordinary how accurately they remember debit and credit items extending over a period of years.

Though constant repetition has since bred familiarity, I still find it interesting to arrive in my launch, the cabin of which is surrounded by shelves bearing printed cotton goods, fish-hooks, axe-heads and handles, knives, fish-lines, tobacco, matches, jews' harps, beads and so forth—a miniature floating stores, in fact—and anchor off the shore opposite a native village, whose inhabitants promptly put forth in their flimsy canoes and cluster round the sides of the vessel.

My trading "beat" is a regular one, and the chiefs and headmen of all the villages are known to me by name. The chief men clamber aboard and squat around the sides of the deck at a respectful distance, and there is usually an interchange of greetings and a prodigious exposure of betel-nut-stained teeth.

Casually then, as if it were an afterthought, I produce various goods—simply holding them up and putting them away again. Not a word of comment is made on either side, and the natives do not even appear to look at the articles, merely glancing once and then turning their eyes away. It is bad form to rush matters, and I have often wondered what they would think of our "bargain sale" counters!

After everything has been put away again a silence ensues, and a trader new to the game would probably think that his stock must be entirely unsaleable and would gloomily wonder whether he ought not to throw the whole lot away. In a little while, however, the men begin to chatter amongst themselves and the chief will point to the pile of cotton waist-cloths (*lava-lavas*), one or two of which are handed to him and "booked" to his account. Thereafter, general business becomes brisk, and the canoes finally glide away shorewards with the acquisitions of the paddlers perched precariously on their bare knees to keep them dry.

A day or two afterwards my sailing cutter will call and pick up copra, or a proportion of it, in payment for the goods supplied. The native boy in charge of the boat keeps no books, but on his return reels off from memory a list of copra payments received—five hundred from Souganu, a hundred from Nuliwali, a hundred and twenty from Goropuku and so on, the figures representing the number of coconuts.

In districts where there is competition among white men for the trade of the natives, a close watch is kept by one's own boys on the native villages where copra is owing. On sighting the drifting plume of blue smoke above a village that denotes the cooking of copra by the inhabitants, the cutter is hurriedly sent to collect it, the first arrival, of course, getting the bulk of that particular cooking.

The Solomons are completely out of the track of hurricanes and typhoons, being within that charmed area, spreading on each side of the Equator, which is free from these terrible atmospheric disturbances. Small launches and sailing cutters can therefore venture far afield without too serious a risk being incurred, though the tide-races in some parts are dangerous and fierce squalls provide plenty of excitement at times.

The tide-race between the islands of Fauro and Choiseul, for instance, is a terrible one, the seas even on the calmest day piling themselves up in steep pyramids which fall solidly on to the deck of any small craft foolish enough to attempt to cross the disturbed area rather than skirt it. Even

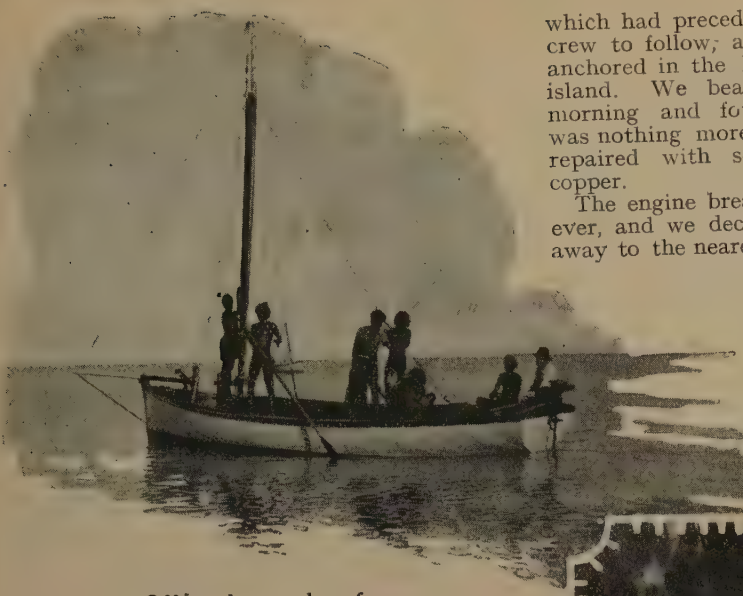
The beach at Leueneua.

A nasty customer.

The Author (left) on the desert island.

in less tumultuous races I have more than once steamed hard against the tide for hours only to find myself at last some miles farther back than when I started.

On leaving the Islands to come home to England I had a nasty experience. I allowed myself forty hours to cover the 'hirty sea miles between Tobosuntai and Gizo, the Sydney steamer's port of call. For thirty long hours I fought a losing battle with sail and engine against wind and current, finally landing in Gizo Harbour with a ripped foresail, torn mainsail, and only a pint of petrol in the tank, just in time to see the steamer leaving the wharf and sheering seawards through the blue waters of the anchorage! It was only owing to the great kindness of Captain Voy, her commander, that I caught the steamer at all, for he reversed his engines, lowered the gangway, and I scrambled aboard. Of the torrent of invective



Off to the coral reef.

with which he greeted me I will make no mention; the twinkle in his eye belied the fury of his words.

I mention this incident to show the uncertainties of island transport, and to Nature's moods must also, of course, be added the deficiencies of man's handiwork. Sometimes one's engine breaks down. One August I had a rather unusual experience arising out of such a mishap. A friend and myself had occasion to make a ninety-mile voyage across the open Pacific between two of the larger Islands of the Solomon Group and, having to take a small sailing cutter with us, we decided to tow it across the open sea during the hours of moonlit darkness.

Setting forth during the afternoon, sunset found us just clearing the last of the foaming coral reefs that crowd those smiling but treacherous seas. A heavy squall was bearing swiftly down upon us, but in another moment we should have passed beyond danger when, with a tremendous uproar, a valve broke in the engine, and the launch began to drift helplessly towards the breakers! Before we could get sail up she was rasping her coppered sides on the coral ledges and heeling over at a dangerous angle. At the very last moment, however, her half-hoisted canvas filled and she drew slowly away from the death-trap—and immediately the squall swooped down upon her!

As she dashed away over the wind-tortured seas we dimly discerned through the driving rain and almost vanished daylight a little island right ahead of us, its score or so of palms whipping and threshing in the gale. We raced past the cutter, which had preceded us, signalling to her crew to follow; and both of us finally anchored in the lee of the lonely little island. We beached the launch next morning and found that the damage was nothing more serious than could be repaired with several new sheets of copper.

The engine breakdown was final, however, and we decided to send the cutter away to the nearest motor engine repair-shop, which unfortunately lay ninety miles to the south! There are only two repair-shops in the whole of the Solomon Islands group—a chance for overcrowded motor-engineers in England! My friend and I set ourselves to wait with what patience

Types of natives.

we could fo· the return of the cutter with the new valves, which we reckoned would be a matter of about six days.

The little island was entirely uninhabited, and only covered an area of about an acre. Twenty or thirty coconut palms occupied the centre, whilst around it ran a most wonderful white coral beach, shelving so steeply and rapidly that it was possible to anchor the launch close inshore—so close, indeed, that we could jump dryshod from the stern to the beach when she swung inwards. We had kept with us three young native boys, and between the intervals of cooking and waiting on us these youngsters went frankly back to the primitive and played about the beaches in a state of nudity, to the secret envy of my friend and myself.

Even at these uttermost ends of the earth the white man must maintain his dignity and self-respect in the presence of natives. It is so enticingly easy to get slack in these matters—and slackness is fatal, as anyone who has lived away from civilization will tell you. For this reason we always shave every day, bathing and changing into clean ducks for the evening meal, however soiled or scanty the raiment we may wear during the hours of daylight.

While we waited on our islet we lived a *dolce far niente* sort of life. For hour after hour I lay and watched the hermit crabs, whose borrowed homes of shell varied in size from a pinhead to that of an orange. I also investigated the habits of the great ants whose leaf houses—centres of ceaseless activity—hung pendent from the bushes. At other times we swam lazily in the milk-warm crystal-clear water (with a cautious eye for sharks and alligators) or paddled off in the dinghy to the coral reefs left exposed by the ebbing tide. Here we gathered the precious trochas pearl-shell, of which there was a considerable quantity, and sometimes shot one of the hawks that circled around. We never tired of watching the great butterflies that winged their way like birds from the mainland fifteen miles away, and sometimes we rigged up a sail on the little dinghy with a bedsheet and a couple of bamboos and scooted about the laughing blue seas in the vicinity of our "Desert Island" (unmarked even on the latest Admiralty Chart).

Every hour seemed to furnish its own interests and the days passed all too swiftly.

There were other occasions, however, when our circumstances were not quite so fortunate. One night, for instance, a fierce squall came up suddenly from a totally unexpected direction and we awoke, amidst the lashing of rain and the whistling of the wind, to find the anchor dragging and our helpless vessel drifting down towards a line of breakers that foamed over a coral reef at our rear! The reef was almost under our counter when the dragging anchor providentially held and checked us, and a spare anchor, hurriedly dropped, made things temporarily secure.

The next morning, after warping the launch back to her anchorage, we passed spare ropes ashore round the boles of palm trees and attached ourselves so securely to the islet that if we had drifted again it would have had to come along with us!

On the eighth day of our sojourn we began to scan the horizon rather anxiously for signs of the returning cutter, but there was no trace of her, and at the end of the thirteenth day things looked serious. Our food supplies were totally exhausted in spite of the rigid economies of the last few days, and it looked as if we were in for an unrelieved diet of coconuts and water. On the morning of the fourteenth day, however, a sudden shout proclaimed the sighting of a sail on the horizon, and an hour afterwards, by waving sheets and flashing mirrors, we succeeded in attracting the attention of a passing trader, who put in and generously supplied us with stores. The cutter—delayed and nearly wrecked more than once by bad weather—arrived later the same day with the new valves and a plentiful supply of foodstuffs.

So everything ended happily, and now, as I sit with the roar of London traffic in my ears, I see again in fancy that lonely little islet in the South Seas, where the blue waters cream along the coral beaches and the palm leaves whisper in the wind. Before very long, I hope, I shall be back there again.

In my next article I shall describe a perilous journey I made into the unknown interior of one of the larger islands.

(To be concluded.)

The Disappearance of Annie Mooney

A narrative proving once again that truth is stranger than fiction. "This story," writes the Author, "is an authoritative account of an actual occurrence. Names of persons, places, and institutions are correctly given, and there has been no deviation from fact from start to finish." Seldom, surely, has anyone been able to establish a lost identity and clear up a thirty-year-old mystery in such a strange and unlooked-for manner.

by ABRAHAM HERSCHIN

ILLUSTRATED BY CYRIL HOLLOWAY

"ANNIE!"

No answer.

Again Mrs. Mooney called, again and again. But in each instance there was no response. Then, with the parents in the lead, a party of willing volunteers began a search of the picnic grounds for the missing child.

All day the search proceeded. Not a bush, not a tree, not a building within the limits of the park escaped the closest scrutiny.

Day turned into night, and still there was no sign of Annie. Lanterns flashed in the darkness, here and there huge bonfires contributed to the illumination, and the search went on all night. Yet at dawn the child remained absent.

At last came the full glare of morning. It found the members of the search-party weary, bedraggled, and footsore, but still willing. Annie's mother was in a pitiful condition, the children swollen-eyed and exhausted from weeping for the sister who was lost, and the hair of the father had turned white overnight!

By this time all San Francisco had taken up the hunt, the police and citizens of that city joining eagerly with the authorities of Belmont, the suburban town where the picnic grounds from which Annie Mooney had disappeared were located.

Painstaking and thorough were the labours of those pledged to the recovery of the child. Operators of street cars, as well as railway men, drivers of vehicles, chance observers, and householders in the district were approached for information. But all in vain.

The activities of the searchers spread to the underworld. Ex-convicts and shady characters by the score were questioned or trailed in the hope of obtaining some clue as to the whereabouts of the four-year-old child. But Annie was not to be found; she had vanished as utterly as though she had been suddenly translated to another planet.

Week followed week in dreary succession, and still the search went on. From a purely local affair the case grew into one of national importance. In every State the hunt was taken up, but the results were invariably disappointing. A large reward was offered and a fortune was spent in inquiries. James Mooney, the father, once a prosperous and highly esteemed resident of San Francisco, became penniless, while the mother endured an agony of heart and mind appreciable only by those into whose life a similar tragedy has entered.

At the very outset expert opinion inclined to the theory of kidnapping for money as a motive for the deed, an alternative theory of revenge being promptly discarded when it was discovered that no man or woman, as far as could be ascertained, had ever suffered the slightest injury at the hands of the kindly Mooneys. Granted that the experts were correct, it was a curious fact that not once did the kidnappers put forth a demand for ransom, not once give an indication whether the child was alive or dead. Whoever they were they kept their secret well. In this connection the general impression was that the miscreants had been frightened off by the intensity of popular indignation. In the end the case took a position alongside that of Charlie Ross, and became the means by which parents could point out to their children the danger of talking to strangers or wandering away from their own neighbourhood.

The months lengthened into a year,

marking the anniversary of Annie Mooney's disappearance. Shortly before this, however, a certain event took place, and it is mentioned in order to show how earnestly the police applied themselves to the search, and also as being illustrative of one of the many ingenious measures adopted to recover the child. On the Fourth of July, at the head of a parade held in celebration of the nation's birthday, there rode in a buggy a detective. In his lap sat little Ida Mooney, a sister of Annie.

In plain view of thousands of people the man and the child passed along, the object being to attract attention to the missing one, who, if she were present with her captors as a spectator of the parade, would doubtless raise an outcry at the sight of her sister. Once such a demonstration was made, policemen and other representatives of the law stationed all along the line of march would have instantly rushed to the spot. However, this clever bit of strategy was productive of nothing save proof of official activity, if indeed proof were needed.

The memorable day of Annie Mooney's disappearance, July 15th, 1883, witnessed many more anniversaries, and still the affair remained a baffling mystery. Decades, in fact, came and went; but always, even after public interest had subsided, Mrs. Mooney doggedly went on with the search. Life for her had no meaning, no significance, other than effort devoted to the discovery of her little daughter. Not until death supervened would she give over the quest for her youngest child. Always, too, she charged her other children never to cease similar endeavours. Even if she died without having achieved her life's ambition, she told them, they must continue the search, for she was certain Annie was still alive.

Thirty-one long years dragged by, and then, in 1915, at the time of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, the people of San Francisco learnt some startling tidings.

Annie Mooney had been found!

With a keen appreciation of what constituted news value, the press carried the story as a front-page feature; for notwithstanding the fact that a new generation had arisen and practically the entire city had been rebuilt from the ashes of 1906, Annie Mooney had never been forgotten.

Yes, Annie Mooney had been found—found as the result of an advertisement which someone had inserted in the *Examiner* in the department set aside for inquiries for missing people. This advertisement, appearing under the date of August 22nd, was observed by Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Arnold, the latter a sister of Annie Mooney. From the wording of the notice the Arnolds were strongly persuaded that it had a bearing upon the subject that was never far from their thoughts. They therefore replied to it, requesting an interview with the advertiser. This was fixed up, and there came to the Arnolds Mrs. G. E. Karstadt of San Francisco.

The moment the Arnolds beheld their visitor they were startled by the striking resemblance she bore to the Mooneys. Convinced that they were face to face with the almost legendary Annie, a meeting of all interested parties was quickly arranged for the purpose of hearing in detail the extraordinary story that Mrs. Karstadt had already imparted to the Arnolds in its main outlines.

The meeting was convened at the home of Mr. Edward Mooney—an uncle of the missing child, who had been indefatigable in the long search. Among those in attendance were the brother and sisters of Annie Mooney, Frank Arnold, some friends of the family, police officers, and newspaper reporters. The parents, alas! were not present. The loving hearts that had come down the years burdened with grief were now still for ever.

In the midst of an impressive silence Mrs. Karstadt told her story. To begin with, she assured her audience, although she had no particular reason for claiming the identity of the missing Annie Mooney, her parentage was quite unknown to her, and she was extremely anxious to establish who she was. Her earliest recollections, she said, were associated with Chinese, whereas she herself was of purest Caucasian blood, and had two white children of her own to prove it further.

As to how she had come to be in the keeping of Orientals, Mrs. Karstadt had a distinct remembrance of wandering down a country road as a very young child and presently arriving at a resort known as the "Casino." From within emanated the strains of lively music, and, fascinated thereby, the little girl stopped to enjoy it. After a time, satisfied with the entertainment, she started off in a direction which she believed would lead her back to the picnic grounds. But she had chosen wrongly, and so, instead of reaching her proper destination, she eventually brought up on the shore of a stretch of marshland whereon was located a cluster of dilapidated shanties.

It was a Chinese settlement, a camp of shrimp-fishers and clam-diggers.

Now, in those days public opinion in the West was hostile to the Chinese, so much so that only the year before Congress had enacted a national exclusion law for the purpose of preventing the immigration of certain elements of the Asiatic races. Whether these clam-diggers, finding themselves innocently in the company of the child, feared reprisals if she were discovered with them, is, of course, a matter of conjecture. But at any rate, instead of bidding the little one begone, it appears that two of the Chinese took possession of her and kept her

in seclusion until a favourable opportunity presented itself for transferring her to San Francisco's Chinatown. Of the means whereby she was conveyed to that picturesque portion of the city Mrs. Karstadt could hazard only a guess; but in all probability it had been accomplished by a horse-drawn vehicle while she was asleep.

The next thing Mrs. Karstadt remembered was being brought to a place which she described as being occupied by a number of "strangely dressed men with long pigtails," engaged in the ironing of clothes.

There she was laid on a table and, despite her cries of pain, her ears were pierced for the subsequent reception of earrings. Following this operation she returned to the street with her captors and was soon lodged in a house where she entered upon a new phase of existence with a Chinese couple, husband and wife.

The dwelling wherein the little white child was to spend much of the future was an underground apartment. The small windows of what did duty for a front room were situated high up, near the ceiling; and in order that no outsider might look within, the blinds were always drawn. These blinds, she said, were a bright red, and she recalled with what childish delight she used to contemplate their gorgeous coloration when they were under illumination from the outside.

In reply to a question relative to the name the Chinese gave her, Mrs. Karstadt said:

"They called me Lin Wing, but not before I had given them my own name—my first name, that is. At least, I supposed it belonged to me, since it was the only one I ever knew. My family name I did not remember at all. So as long as I remained in Chinatown I had two names—'Lin Wing' and 'Annie.'"

As may be imagined this utterance created a sensation. Instantly there flashed into every mind the thought, "If this statement is capable of proof can there be any doubt as to Mrs. Karstadt's right to the identity of Annie Mooney?"

Continuing, Mrs. Karstadt went on to state that, so far as the male Chinese was concerned, she saw very little of him; but as for the woman, the child was constantly in her company, and before long the woman conceived a genuine liking for her little white charge.

From the start Annie underwent a process of transformation. In the first place the garments in which she had entered upon her new life were removed and the raiment of the Orient substituted. Next the crown of her head was shaved and a queue affixed. At the places where her own fair hair betrayed the deception there was applied some jet-black dye. Her skin also received treatment, this consisting of a yellowish pigment worked in over the whole body.

Chinese was, of course, the language of the household; and in due time the little girl was able to converse quite intelligibly with her captors. In so far as circumstances could make it possible, she at length became even more thoroughly disguised owing to the slight cast in her right eye becoming entirely concealed by an enlargement of the pupils, while a half-closed aspect was assumed by the lids—the consequence of existence in a place where semi-darkness prevailed all the time.

For two years the girl remained in this underground home. Then came a time when the doors crashed down before the onslaught of axes and sledge-hammers. The police had made a raid. The inmates had been suspected of unlawful practices, and the attacking party had apparently used force in order to surprise the suspects in the act.

Immediately on the first hint of danger little Lin Wing's "mother" grabbed her up, thrust her into a trunk, jammed down the lid, and awaited developments.

She had not long to wait, for the moment the child found herself in a dark and confined space, she set up a series of cries and pounded as hard as she could on the sides of the trunk.

The police, of course, soon discovered the source of the disturbance. The lid being opened, there emerged from concealment a weeping, dishevelled, and very much frightened little "Lin Wing."

The girl, immediately upon her release, addressed the policemen in English, which was quite enough to warrant

GIRL STOLEN
31 YEARS AGO
LOCATES KIN

Mrs. G. E. Kostadt Now Believes She Is Annie Mooney, Who Was Kidnaped by Chinese

San Francisco Family She Calls Long Lost Relatives Firm in Belief That Claim Is True

Mother and Father Died in Vain Search; Reunion Is Planned to Get All Facts

Has Annie Mooney been found?

Thirty-one years ago San Francisco was stirred in all its mother and father heart by the strange disappearance of the baby daughter of James Mooney at a carpenter's picnic at Belmont.

Her father and mother died seven years ago still mourning their lost babe. She became legendary in the family. That fairy house in the tree tops where all lost babies go to play with Peter Pan was unwilling to yield its secret.

Now, out of this dim past, with something of the look of little Annie in her eyes, comes Mrs. G. E. Kostadt, 1530 Dolores street, convinced that she is Annie Mooney. Mrs. Kostadt's history, as she remembers it, parallels the disappearance of Annie Mooney.

KIDNAPPED BY CHINESE.

She was kidnapped by Chinese. She

A cutting from a San Francisco newspaper referring to the Annie Mooney case.

her removal to the Presbyterian Mission, there to be held for further examination.

There and then the little captive definitely relinquished her Chinese "Lin Wing" and gave to the authorities the name of "Annie," and as Annie she went down on the books. Other questions she also answered in English, for despite the lapse of time the child was still familiar with her mother tongue. The final result satisfied the Mission officials that they had in their custody a child of the white race who unfortunately was not at all clear as to her antecedents.

"Annie" was well cared for by her new friends, and after a few weeks was transferred to the Franklin Home, an orphanage. As at the Mission, so at the orphanage, her treatment was of the best. Her name went down as "Annie," to which was added a patronymic; so that the entry concerning her read somewhat as follows: "Annie Browning; colour, white; age, five years; mother and father dead."

Six months went by; then, at the end of the half-year, Annie passed into the keeping of a childless Portuguese couple, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Sequeira, who legally adopted her. In this transaction the child who had lately been "Lin Wing" acquired yet another name; this time Rhoda—Rhoda Sequeira.

The couple lived in Hayward, a town in Alameda County, beyond the east shore of San Francisco Bay. There they resided for a further two years, the father plying his trade of shoe-repairing, when a removal was decided upon. Presently, therefore, little "Rhoda" found herself in Berkeley, the site of the University of California.

Annie Mooney at the time she was known as "Rhoda Sequeira."

Here, said Mrs. Karstadt, she well remembered how her roving proclivities involved her in an adventure. One day an itinerant showman came to her neighbourhood exhibiting a performing bear. Delighted with the unusual spectacle, the girl followed it about, all the time getting farther away from home. About sundown, finding she had strayed a long way, she had just decided to seek a sleeping place when she was recovered by her anxious guardians. That night she was the recipient of a good round scolding, and as an inducement to change her behaviour she was told the story of Annie Mooney.

That, said Mrs. Karstadt, was the first time she had ever heard anything about the missing girl. While it made a deep impression upon her, the tale was told in such a manner as to create the idea that it had all transpired ages ago—so long ago that by no stretch of the imagination could it have anything to do with the little girl who was called Rhoda Sequeira. Not even in the ensuing years, when a growing curiosity concerning her real identity impelled her to question her foster-parents, did she phrase her interrogations in a way to connect herself with the vanished girl whose name was identical with her own.

At eighteen Rhoda Sequeira became a bride. For the fourth time in her life she received a new name, this time that of her husband—Mr. G. E. Karstadt, of San Francisco.

With the birth of her first child Mrs. Karstadt began her self-questionings anew. Who *was* she? Where were her parents? Alive or dead? Over and over again she pondered the problem, always reaching the regretful conclusion that a solution was impossible. All that had happened since she had been removed from Chinatown was a matter of open record—set down in black and white for anyone to read—but prior to that everything was a blank, and seemed likely to remain so. Not even the frequent visits which Mrs. Karstadt paid to her Chinese "mother," with whom she had kept in touch, elicited an inkling of the truth. To the interpreter from the Presbyterian Mission who accompanied Mrs. Karstadt on these visits the old woman always affirmed ignorance. Her husband had brought the child home—that was all she would say, except to add that he had fled from San Francisco and was probably now in China. The woman, by the way, had only become reconciled to the loss of her "Lin Wing" by being given the guardianship of a little Chinese waif.

Again Mrs. Karstadt became a mother, and again she made fruitless efforts to solve the mystery of her early life. Finally the year 1915 came, and then Mrs. Karstadt remembered a consultation she had once held with a fortune-teller whose assistance she had sought. The seer, said Mrs. Karstadt, had told her that with the advent of the

"On the first hint of danger little Lin Wing's 'mother' grabbed her up and thrust her into a trunk."

Exposition there would come to San Francisco strangers from all over the world, and that among their number there might be one who could help her with her problem.

On the face of it it looked reasonable, yet Mrs. Karstadt was not particularly impressed. In fact for some time she gave no further heed to the suggestion. In the end,

however, everything else having failed, she determined to take an apparently hopeless chance and insert an advertisement in a prominent newspaper.

For her purpose she selected the San Francisco *Examiner*, but her faith was so scant in any possible good accruing that she allowed a whole week to elapse before going to the newspaper office to learn if there had been a reply. Indeed, she told her auditors that had she not been shopping in the near vicinity it is quite unlikely that she would have thought any more about what seemed to be an ill-advised action. When she *did* make inquiry, however, there, to her profound astonishment, was a letter. The result was public property—and she was present this evening to learn if anyone knew who she was, Annie Mooney or otherwise.

Such was the story Mrs. Karstadt told. There came now the work of checking up each detail of the narrative. Not much doubt existed as to the truth of the recital, since from her very first appearance there was observed a startling facial resemblance between Mrs. Karstadt and the Mooneys. But a lifetime of false leads and shattered hopes having inculcated in some of the family a tendency to proceed cautiously, it was thought advisable to withhold a verdict for the present. Moreover, it was deemed only fair to subject the whole matter to a careful and impartial investigation.

So, step by step, patiently and scrupulously, the experts worked their way back into the misty past; and step by step they met with corroboration of Mrs. Karstadt's every statement.

Thus there really had been a resort called the "Casino." Also, there had been a Chinese camp near Belmont—still in existence for that matter, though long since abandoned and falling into decay. Then there were the books of the Presbyterian Mission and the orphanage. They, too, supplied their share of confirmation. When it came to tracing down the Chinese "mother" it was learned that she had died just fourteen months before at Lane Hospital.

Finally there were the early photographs of Mrs. Karstadt and the Mooney girls. All had been taken about the same time, and one and all they tallied. Moreover, when it came to comparing the likenesses of Mrs. Karstadt and James Mooney, whom she resembled more than any other, the result was positively overwhelming. Every feature of the girl's face was the counterpart of the man's—the broad forehead, the nose, mouth and jaw, the powerful and well-formed chin.

Mrs. Karstadt, the long-lost "Annie Mooney."

It really seemed as if the case was complete; that neither Mrs. Karstadt nor the Mooneys need continue their investigations. At this juncture, however, there was submitted the additional testimony of Mrs. Mary O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill, a life-long friend of Mrs. Mooney, was a woman of seventy, but with a memory fresh and clear. Said Mrs. O'Neill, repeating a statement once made to her by the bereaved mother, "Mary, I shall always know my baby by the mark on her body, which only her nurse and I know is there."

This announcement induced Protective Officer Mrs. Katherine O'Connor, of the Police Department, to undertake an examination. The mark was found. Mrs. O'Connor also discovered that the second toe of Mrs. Karstadt's right foot projected beyond the great toe. Mrs. Karstadt's two-year-old daughter, Fern, had the same odd birthmark as her mother and an elongated toe on the right foot. Alone of all the Mooney children Mrs. Karstadt had inherited this peculiar characteristic from her father.

Now at last the case was complete, and Mrs. Karstadt was able to resume her rightful place in the Mooney family and face the world in her proper person.

Some strange facts were unearthed in the course of the investigation. For example, there was the part played by a certain school-teacher. This gentleman conducted a class in one of the San Francisco public schools, and numbered among his pupils some of the Mooney children. The school-master, who resided in Berkeley, an easy boat-ride from San Francisco, became acquainted with Annie Mooney's foster father. Both men being enthusiasts of the checker-board, they indulged in many a game in Sequeira's shoe-shop. And though little Annie was occasionally observed watching the play, never did the teacher dream that he held in his hands one end of the thread of the Mooney mystery.

Another point is worth mentioning. For thirteen years after her marriage to Mr. Karstadt, Annie Mooney had been a resident of the Mission district of San Francisco, living only a few blocks away from her kinsmen; but never once did they meet. A strange world, indeed!

Years have passed now since the elucidation of the mystery of Annie Mooney's disappearance. In the interval Frank Arnold's wife died, and in time he married another of the Mooney girls—none other than the famous Annie herself. Both are still living in San Francisco, the happy parents of several beautiful children.

"It is an extraordinary sight to see them sitting at their desks, with snow all around them, doing their lessons."

THE MOST WONDERFUL SCHOOL IN THE WORLD

by David Masters

A description of a visit to a remarkable "sun-cure" establishment in the Swiss mountains where youngsters may be seen learning their lessons and romping about in the deep snow clad only in loin-cloths and boots! All these children, only a short time ago, were apparently hopeless cripples or bedridden invalids! Mr. Masters' account of the seeming miracles wrought by the discoverer of the "cure" will be found particularly interesting.

WHEN I arrived at Aigle, in Switzerland, I knew that my journey of close on a thousand miles to find the Most Wonderful School in the World was approaching its end. I stepped from the platform to the little mountain train which ran like a tram through the village street. The open market of Aigle was being held under the topped plane trees in a triangular open space, and all the peasants from the neighbouring farmsteads were there with baskets of potatoes and other vegetables set on the snowy ground for sale — a quaint and homely scene.

We came now to the real beginning of the climb into the mountains and waited while the toothed gear of the engine was fitted to the cog-rail in the centre of the track. Then, slowly but surely, we made our way upward through most exquisite scenery. The vineyards through which we passed in the early stages were most remarkable. They were built in terraces up the steep mountain-sides, the soil being kept in position by walls of stone and rock. Some of the vineyards were only a

A former helpless little cripple enjoys himself on ski.

few feet wide, and wound a most serpentine course round the mountain, following all its contours. Above and below were more vineyards, and still more; there seemed to be a never-ending vista of them. On the other side of the valley the giant peaks of the Dents du Midi stabbed the sunny sky. Below us lay the plain, with the village of Aigle.

So we mounted, skirting dizzy slopes, leaving the vineyards far behind us, and crawling through woodlands and upland pastures. Some of the gradients were so steep that they were like the roof of a house. When I finally jumped out of the mountain train at Leysin village I was about a mile up in the air.

The first fall of snow, two or three days previously, had banished all wheels from Leysin until the spring. Sleighs met the train, to add their picturesque note to the scene and convey some of the visitors

A class on the way to a sheltered spot.

to their hotels. Two or three boys with their little toboggans, or *luge*, as they are called, also awaited our arrival in order to pick up expected packages. They put their packages aboard, sat on behind, and slid swiftly down the slope to the village, with many a laugh and shout.

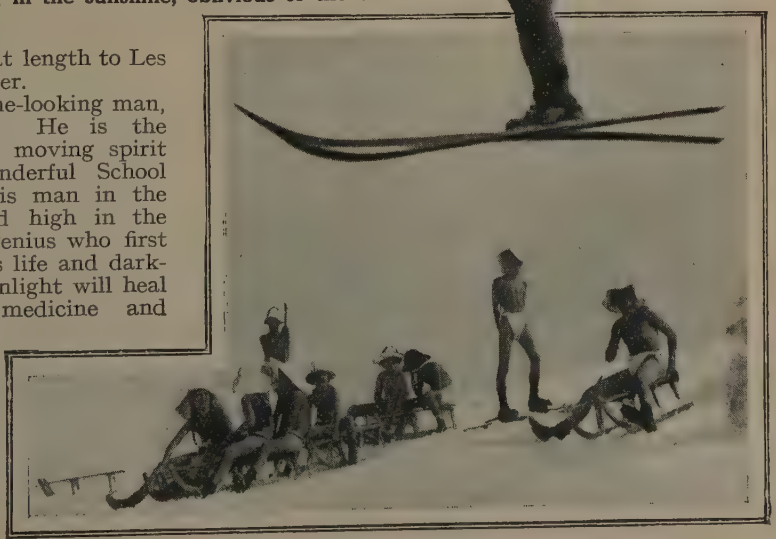
I looked about me. Lovely views abounded on all sides. The sun was hot; the snow crisp and dry. Then I trudged off down the village street, with its old chalets, and babies sitting on tiny *luge* while their mothers were shopping in the village store, and so came at length to Les Frênes and Dr. Rollier.

Dr. Rollier is a fine-looking man, bronzed and busy. He is the apostle of light, the moving spirit of the "Most Wonderful School in the World." This man in the little village perched high in the Swiss Alps is the genius who first realized that light is life and darkness death; that sunlight will heal and cure where medicine and surgery fail. For many years he was too busy practising to find time to preach, but rumours of his remarkable work gradually filtered through to London, Paris, and New York, and now the movement he started in the Alps at Leysin twenty years ago is spreading all over the earth.

Dr. Rollier calls his school "The School in the Sun," but I prefer to call it by the title of this article. Open-air schools are now fairly common; we have many in England, where the pupils may be seen in summer taking their lessons in the open air. The youngsters are of course clothed, and the only novelty is that they have the sky above them instead of the ceiling of a stuffy classroom. The Most Wonderful School in the World, however, is very different. Instead of the children being clothed, they are quite naked except for triangular loin-cloths and boots.

It is an extraordinary sight to see them sitting at their little desks, with snow all around them, doing their lessons. They wear no

Skating in the sunshine, oblivious to the cold.



Some of the "convalescents" practising winter sports.

clothes—the sun and air play freely on their naked bodies—and though it is the depth of winter, with a foot or so of snow on the ground, they do not feel the cold at all. This savours of a miracle, yet it is an actual everyday fact at Leysin.

Often the most astounding contrasts may be witnessed. A few favoured visitors, wrapped up in fur coats, with mufflers round their necks, fur gloves on their hands, and fur caps pulled down tightly over their ears, will stand watching the children at their studies. From time to time the onlookers shiver and stamp their feet in the snow to keep them warm, but the youngsters, with nothing on, sit there doing their lessons quite unconcerned. They do not shiver; on the contrary, they look and feel quite warm, despite their absence of clothing.

Sometimes, round about Christmas-time, you may see a class of boys starting out with their master to some sunny slope on which to set up their portable desks and do their lessons. They have *skis* on their feet, and they carry slung over their shoulders the little desks and stools on which they sit and work. The master is clad like the boys—just in bathing-drawers and boots. And all of them set out gaily over the snow, enjoying the exercise and the fresh air and the sunshine.

They glide down a hillside, climb again, and come at last to a most beautiful open-air class-room, all carpeted with fresh snow, with the Alps in the background and never a harmful germ to be found anywhere. The place is a perfect sun-trap, nicely sheltered from any wind, and here they set up their desks, open their books, and develop their minds while their bodies acquire vigour from the beneficent rays of the sun.

When lessons are over they may be seen ski-ing or rushing down the hillside on toboggans and *luge*. Some don skates and skim about like swallows over the ice, cutting the most graceful figures and showing perfect command of their muscles and bodies.

I have seen these naked youngsters, sweeping down the slope on a *luge*, finish "all ends up" in the deep snow amid peals of laughter. They dig themselves out, set their *luge* on its runners again, and up the hill they go to enjoy another dizzy rush down. They do not seem to heed their tumbles in the snow. Apparently they do not notice any discomfort, and they seldom trouble to brush the snow off their naked bodies!

My lady who spends a fortune on clothes in Bond Street in order to go out to the winter sports does not enjoy herself half so much as these wonderful pupils in the Most Wonderful School in the World. Some of them can do the most amazing things on skis, and many skate with a natural grace and balance that the visitors who go to Switzerland in winter would envy.

A tug-of-war on the mountain-side in summer time.

The astounding thing is that these children, who disport themselves practically nude in the snow, were bedridden invalids when they went to Leysin. Some had diseased legs and hips; others had poor little bent backs with most terrible humps on them. Yet here they are with limbs healed and backs straightened enjoying vigorous life and health. Their skins are bronzed, and their sturdy bodies as well set-up as those of athletes.

I have often been asked how it is done, and how it is that they do not feel the cold while other people are compelled to don fur coats. The miracle, of course, is due solely to the sun—and Dr. Rollier. For months, perhaps, they have lain in their beds while

Another summer scene. Pupils of the "sun school" busy hay-making.

the sun's rays have bathed their afflicted bodies and gradually healed them. The sun's rays, says Dr. Rollier, are the greatest of all germicides; they mean death to disease if the "doses" are properly administered. There is, however, terrible danger to anyone who tampers with sunlight in a haphazard way, and many a person has died as the result of undue exposure to the all-powerful rays.

'Midst Alpine flowers in all their beauty. A class of youngsters in ideal surroundings.

It is just as easy to die of too much sun as it is to die of too little, and nowhere is this recognized more than at Leysin. No one could commit a greater folly than suddenly to expose the chest, say, to the full glare of the sun; congestion of the lungs and death might easily ensue in a few hours. The sun, therefore, has to be administered, like any other medicine, in small doses at first, gradually strengthening the doses as the body becomes used to the changed conditions.

When a little child first goes to Leysin one foot will be exposed to the sun for five minutes; the next day both feet will be exposed. The result is carefully noted, to see how the child is standing the sun, and perhaps a week later one whole leg will be exposed, and then the other. These have to become acclimatized before first one thigh, and then the other, will be uncovered, and so on with the arms and upper parts of the body, until the whole organism gets used to the changed conditions and can stand the sun's rays for long stretches of time.

Throughout the whole treatment the greatest care has to be exercised. Some patients stand the sun-cure better than others. With the cure goes a rational diet, mainly of milk and fruit; very little meat is eaten, and it is never taken more than once a day.

It is well known that the muscles usually waste and the use of the limbs is largely lost after months of lying in bed. But the strange thing is that no such thing happens during this treatment. The body gets browner and browner day by day, and the muscles, instead of wasting owing to lack of use, actually develop under the healing rays of the sun. After a few months some of the children are so well developed that they look as if they have been taking a strenuous course of physical culture instead of lying still for week after week.

The sun-baths are not indulged in all day long. They are taken for a certain period—so many hours, perhaps—and then the patients rest. In summer, when the sun is very hot, the baths are taken first thing in the morning, to avoid the dangers arising from too-powerful rays.

The work that Dr. Rollier is doing at Leysin is quite extraordinary. Surgery has no place in his creed. The finest surgeon, he claims, is the sun; the finest medicine, the sun's rays. Little hunchbacks grow straight again, limbs that other doctors have advised should be amputated grow well and strong, and the day comes when patients who have been confined to their beds for long periods are able to get about. Then they go to the open-air school and learn their lessons and become hardy and active at the same time.

The children, owing to their long stay in Leysin, could not be allowed to go untaught. It was necessary that their general education should not be neglected while they were being led along the road to health, so Dr. Rollier installed a teacher, and out of this departure the school has grown.

Many medical men scorned the idea that the sun could work such miracles. They refused to credit the evidence of photographs, and were so steeped in their own old theories that they simply could not believe that anything so simple as sunlight could accomplish more than the greatest surgeons and doctors living.

There was one little boy who was apparently doomed. The doctors said nothing could save him, and they decided to make a test case of him.

"Cure him with your sun treatment," they said to Dr. Rollier, "and we will believe there is something in it."

The genius of Leysin took them at their word. He treated the boy and achieved the seemingly impossible. To-day that so-called incurable is a hale and hearty lad, enjoying life to the full.

"What first gave you the idea?" I asked Dr. Rollier.

His eyes roved over the snowy roofs far below us. "When I first came to Leysin," he said, "over twenty years ago, I noticed that the people working in the woods often gave themselves terrible gashes, that their hands and fingers were sometimes badly injured. Yet they did nothing to their injuries, and in a short time the wounds were quite healed. I knew that if such injuries were neglected in the city, the results might prove fatal. I puzzled over the question as to why they should heal so easily up here in the mountains, and at last I was forced to the conclusion that the sunshine and the germ-free air were the healing factors. I studied the matter very carefully, and finally started to work out the methods of the sun-cure treatment. I took a patient or two down there in the old chalet, and that was the beginning of it."

I looked about me. Clinics, huge sanatoria, and big hotels dotted the mountainside. Twenty years ago not one existed. Leysin was then just a tiny collection of chalets perched up in the mountains, unknown and unheard of. It might still be buried in the wilds of Central Africa for all the majority of people know of it, yet in this Swiss village, in an ancient chalet, there started one of the most important movements of modern times.

On the roof of the old chalet where Dr. Rollier began his work was built the first "solarium," or sun-bath, constructed in living memory, and here those who came to find health took their sun-baths and gradually got better. Now mighty palaces are erected, designed on the most scientific lines, in order that the sun may do its beneficent work. The rooms have double doors; there are vistas of polished floors, hygienic and

germ-free, corridors of spotless white enamel, theatres, cinemas, musical and dramatic entertainments, and restaurants with clever caterers who know how to satisfy the ravenous appetites that the open air creates.

I wondered why all the doorways were so wide, and then I learned that it was to allow beds to be wheeled in and out easily. There are no obstructions on the floor to interfere with the wheeling, and I noticed that the lifts are also big enough to hold a bed. Maybe someone taking the "sun cure" has a room on the first floor. It seems a long way to the "solarium" on the roof, but it is merely a question of opening the door, wheeling out the bed, putting it in the lift, and taking it up to the top—less effort than is required to drag the average bed across a room. Everything that science can devise in the interests of health is to be found at Leysin.

I saw little children and grown men lying on the balconies taking their sun-baths, and some of them were so sun-burned that they looked like negroes. All were smiling and cheerful; some were reading, one was tapping a typewriter, and several were making baskets and bags to pass away the time and to help pay their expenses. Dr. Rollier has over thirty clinics under his charge to-day, and every class of sun-cure establishment is to be found for every class of person. There are some where treatment is free, or almost so, and others where it is administered in sumptuous palaces.

Leysin is a lovely place, with a great rampart of wooded mountains behind it to protect it from cold winds. If ever there was "a place in the sun" it is here, for the sun shines summer and winter; and often in December, although the snow is a couple of feet thick on the ground, the sun temperature reaches 105 or more degrees. It is queer to see the naked brown youngsters disporting themselves in the snow and at the same time wearing sun-hats in order to protect themselves from sunstroke! They never play or lie in the sun without protecting their heads and the nape of their necks. They do not feel cold because the sun has toned up their bodies and induced the pores of the skin to function as Nature intended, and instead of relying upon clothes for warmth, every little muscle in their bodies is acting like a tiny furnace and creating sufficient heat to keep them warm.

They are very hardy, these children, but even they cannot do everything with impunity. They dare not expose their bodies to a keen wind in winter even if the sun *is* shining, but as keen winds seldom visit Leysin there are not many days when the pupils of the Most Wonderful School in the World cannot disport themselves on their picturesque mountains.

Fun in the snow. The children do not seem to feel the cold at all.

Those who are lying on the balconies taking sun-baths do not sleep out all night. The temperature in Switzerland at that altitude drops thirty or forty degrees directly the sun goes down and may easily go below zero in the night.

I have seen many strange things in many places, but never anything so inspiring as the spectacle of these children of the sun—erstwhile hopeless cripples and invalids—enjoying themselves on the snow-clad Swiss mountains, their brown bodies glowing with health and vigour and their light-hearted laughter betokening their happy minds. But for the sun these children would now be dead or else hobbling about on crutches minus legs and arms. It seemed almost unbelievable.

As I got into the little mountain train to drop down to Aigle the impression that was uppermost in my mind was that in this Alpine village there was a man who was helping to mould the world afresh. The same rumours that attracted me to Leysin take men there from all over the world to see Dr. Rollier and learn about his methods. It is worth travelling a long way to see The Most Wonderful School in the World.

OBYADA — BAD INDIAN

by

R.C.Hunter

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY L. WOOD

"This story," writes the Author, "was told to me by the former Royal North-West Mounted policeman concerned, whose nickname was Pluck. The narrative is absolutely true, and the facts were reported in the Canadian newspapers at the time."

ONE day in 1912 word reached the headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police, through some underground channel, that Obyada, an Indian of considerable notoriety, was on the rampage. He had got fighting drunk, had knifed a man, set things generally alight in the Red Deer district, and then decamped.

"He is a real bad egg," said the officer to Pluck, "and this time he has broken his own record."

Obyada was indeed a bad egg. He had been a source of anxiety to the Mounted Police for some considerable time, and they had been in doubt as to how to deal with him, because the Government had issued instructions that Indian troubles were to be "handled with gloves." A policy of conciliation had to be adopted by the police authorities, and anything likely to lead to trouble was discouraged.

Obyada — meaning, literally, "the screamer"—had ended up in prison on every previous occasion when he had succeeded in getting drink. A mass of tingling nerves and undisciplined passions, always imagining insult when no insult was intended, he never hesitated to express his opinion of anyone, or to use knife or gun if he thought fit.

Twice he had escaped the gallows by the merest fluke, having on both occasions stabbed personal friends who happened to differ from him. If all accounts were true, however, he had now put these little affairs in the shade, for he had killed an Indian—an old man and a chief—appropriated his horse, and disappeared.

Pluck was delegated to investigate the case.

"You will need to be careful," the officer told him. "You understand, of course, that we are under special instructions about our dealings with Indians. Before we can put him to the limit of the law we must be particularly sure of our evidence."

Careful inquiry at the Indian Reservation, whither Pluck went first of all, resulted in the discovery that Obyada's old mother had also disappeared, leaving no message with anyone as to her destination—not even with her married daughter, who lived on the edge of the village. It was inferred from this circumstance that she had gone after her son and would probably be found in his company. The murder was not denied, several witnesses testifying freely to having seen the actual deed, but the cool manner in which the killing was accepted and even condoned by the majority of the Indians, and the perfunctory way in which they waved aside any reference to the criminal or his escape, were revelations to Pluck of the native's indifference to crime.

In due course Pluck returned to headquarters and reported that there was quite enough evidence to hang Obyada, but little hope of learning anything of his whereabouts from the Indians.

The officer smiled.

"The main thing at present," he said, "is to make certain of your witnesses. The rest can wait."

The officer knew that Obyada was not the man to seek shelter in the backwoods for any length of time, and he was justified in h.s

opinion by a series of events which presently stirred the townsnip of Red Deer. A number of thefts occurred in the vicinity, and a detective who was sent out to investigate returned with the story that the depredations were committed by outsiders, possibly a gang. They had ridden into the town from some distance, according to the evidence, and money, blankets, food, and horses were the objects of their attention. All this pointed to Indian tactics; nobody but an Indian would take comparatively worthless articles and leave jewellery, plate, and other valuables alone.

The officer declared at once that the vanished Obyada was responsible for the thefts, and Pluck was deputed to bring him in, being allowed, as usual, a free hand as to his methods. In the course of his service Pluck had learnt that Indian strategy was not to be judged by what appeared on the surface, and he decided that his presence in Red Deer would be a distinct hindrance to success. Moreover, he had a "hunch" that, in spite of his previous failure, better results would be obtained by maintaining a quiet, unobtrusive watch upon the criminal's relatives at the Reservation. On his previous visit he had noticed a thick bluff of poplar a little way out on the prairie, and he made up his mind to take up his position there one night and await results, keeping carefully out of sight and watching the doings of the natives.

Arrived at the little wood, he searched it with the aid of his flashlight and presently discovered an old, deserted hut, rapidly falling into ruin, but exactly suited to his purpose. It is no use trying to "rush" Indians, and Pluck's plan was to lie low and watch, with the aid of a powerful field-glass, what occurred in the Reservation from day to day. He was convinced that sooner or later his patience would be rewarded and some clue come to light.

The supervisor of the Reservation, however, gave him no encouragement. He passed the bluff the first day Pluck took up his vigil, and the watcher revealed himself, exacting a promise of secrecy.

"I guess you are wasting time," said the supervisor, after hearing Pluck's story. "Indians are not caught so easily as all that. Not a man, woman, or child will reveal a secret by word or act even if it be common knowledge in the village."

"I'll give it a trial, anyhow," said Pluck.

With characteristic tenacity he held on to his purpose, till at last in a most casual and unexpected manner he uncovered a clue.

One day a little Indian maid, in pursuit of prairie roses, wandered in the direction of the bluff and penetrated into its shelter, where the flowers she sought grew abundantly. She gathered busily, arranging the blooms as she plucked them, humming a quaint, monotonous tune to herself the while. Lifting her eyes from the posy, she presently perceived Pluck watching her, and though she may have been frightened, she showed nothing of it in her demeanour, but kept her solemn gaze steadily fixed on the policeman's face.

He knew that the Indian children were taught English in the Reservation schools and would, therefore, have no difficulty in understanding. So he asked with an ingratiating smile:—

"What you doin', missy?"

"Making flowers for grandma," she answered precisely, in the clipped accent of the Indian.

"And who is grandma?" he asked.

"Bright Moon," said the child.

Pluck straightened up with a jerk, for she had given the name of Obyada's mother, whom he was particularly anxious to meet.

"Is grandma ill, then?" he inquired.

"No, she is not ill, but she is far away," she told him, and now Pluck noticed the peculiarly sad inflection the Indian voice adopts on occasion.

"Where has she gone?"

He felt a bit mean questioning the child, but reconciled himself to it by the consideration that the urgency of the case justified him in using any practical means to gain his object.

"Away," she repeated vaguely.

"And where is mother?" asked Pluck.

"Mother is in our house. Over there——" and the child pointed to the nearest shack.

"'So near and yet so far,'" quoted Pluck, in an undertone, regarding the child with increased interest.

"And grandma is comin' home to-morrow, you say?" he said, suggestively.

"No; to-night," she corrected him.

"Well, don't wander far, little one," said Pluck, and he turned away satisfied with the information he had obtained.

The child resumed her occupation, speedily losing all interest in the stranger, who, had she known it, was already busy with a plan that would, if it succeeded, end in disaster to those she loved.

That night Pluck lay in hiding, having discovered a convenient dip near the Indian shack where, in the semi-darkness, he would be unobserved, and whence he commanded a view of the front of the dwelling, which was clearly defined in the light from the window. Towards midnight he was rewarded by hearing the hoof-beats of a horse, and the sudden illumination of the dwelling from within advised him that the old lady had arrived. It was evident that she did not intend to stay any time, for she dismounted and tethered her pony to a post. Pluck, determined not to lose sight of her, fetched his horse from the bluff and waited. The night, though moonless, was brilliantly starry, and moving objects could easily be distinguished. Pluck, mounted and ready,

"Springing over the parapet he confronted a levelled revolver held by the Indian, who lay wounded on the ground."

waited at some distance, keenly alert for the opening of the shack door and any movement that might follow.

At length the old lady emerged. She did not seem to be in any hurry, and as she mounted her cayuse she did not attempt to lower her voice, possibly feeling secure in the loyalty and taciturnity of the tribe, and never suspecting that she was being watched.

Keeping at a considerable distance Pluck

had no difficulty in following her unobserved, for she was apparently obsessed by some engrossing thought and entirely unsuspicious. She travelled fast and straight without any effort to cover her trail. Pluck knitted his brows in perplexity, for he had learned to regard every action of the Indians with suspicion, and this open and urgent progress might, for all he knew, lead him into an ambuscade or hidden danger of some kind.

The following night he lay at full length on a small plateau in the hillside, lo king straight

across a creek about a hundred yards wide, and watching the movements of the outlaw in his place of concealment. It was a natural cave in the side of the hill opposite, wide at the mouth and seemingly narrowing as it receded, the entrance being fortified by a strongly-constructed barricade of stones, man-high and loopholed. Pluck, being somewhat higher-placed than the cave, could see what was in progress, and he noticed that the criminal did not seem to welcome the presence of his mother, and even tried to force her out of his fortress by main strength. Though pushed out, however, she invariably returned, till at length, wearied by her persistence, Obyada let her enter in peace. This little by-play revealed to Pluck that there were other men behind the barricade. How many he could not determine, but he had certainly seen two heads, and had even heard their voices as they encouraged Obyada to persevere in his unnatural attitude. Evidently reinforcements would be necessary if the place had to be stormed. He therefore took careful note of the surroundings and then slipped quietly back to where his horse was concealed. Reaching Edmonton after a two-days' ride, he reported progress and asked for help in order to enable him to effect a capture.

"Three men could do it, sir," Pluck told his superior.

"You don't know Obyada," said the officer. "You'll want half-a-dozen at least."

Pluck looked surprised, showing his dissent by a shake of the head.

"Humph!" grunted the officer. "You know the Red man better than I do, no doubt. Believe me, he is 'some' fighter when on the rampage."

They compromised on a contingent of four, and very soon, fully armed with rifle and revolver, the little party took the trail for Obyada's stronghold, waiting for darkness

before they approached the place. Pluck took the opportunity of the period of waiting to instruct the men as to his plan of attack, assigning to each his position. They were not to advance or start shooting till they heard his rifle in action, for Pluck hoped to end the struggle by his own first shot. As it grew dark he left his assistants and sought his former place of vantage.

Reaching the plateau, he came to an abrupt halt. Seated on the point overlooking the creek he saw the figure of the old mother, wrapped in her blanket. Silhouetted against the sky-line, she sat motionless, sphinx-like, seemingly fast asleep.

Pluck hesitated. It seemed to him that the outlaw had effected his purpose and managed to drive the old lady from the protection of the cave. Moved by pity, he was stepping forward to warn her that her position was dangerous when she raised her head, saw him, and began to croon a song, her voice increasing in volume the nearer he came to her. Just in time Pluck realized that the chant was a warning signal to the beleaguered outlaws, and he dropped full length. Almost at the same instant a shot rang out, followed by two other reports in rapid succession, and the wind of the bullets, singing over his head, advised the trooper that he was the objective.

Pluck lay motionless awaiting developments, for now that a surprise was impossible he felt certain his men would begin operations on their own initiative. Meanwhile he watched the old lady narrowly. Her attention had been drawn from him by some movement on her right, and presently her weird song was resumed, the direction in which she was looking indicating to those in the cave the quarter from which the attack was coming. Suddenly the firing was repeated—one shot followed in quick time by two others. The old lady was obviously a danger to the success of the enterprise, and Pluck hesitated as to whether he should put her out of action or not. He drew a bead on her with his rifle, but could not bring himself to fire. Nevertheless it was exasperating to be circumvented by an old woman, and for a time Pluck writhed in impotence. At last an inspiration came to him. Taking careful aim at the old lady's headpiece, which was mostly blanket and feathers, he sent a shot into it. Then taking advantage of her confusion, he sprang to his feet and reached the edge of the plateau immediately behind her.

"Don't move or turn or I'll shoot," he whispered.

The old woman sat rigid, motionless as a graven image.

Only one shot, he noticed, was answering the outlaws' fire, and he wondered if his men were all right. Cautiously peering round Bright Moon's shoulder, he observed one of the Indians standing upright, success having evidently made him incautious. Up went the trooper's rifle, he pressed the trigger, and the Red man pitched forward and lay motionless. Later on he got another who, leaning forward, was answering the fire of the policeman somewhere below him. So fas as Pluck could judge Obyada alone now survived to carry on the struggle. Never doubting the issue, Pluck settled down patiently, his attention divided between the cave and the woman at his side, whose glittering eyes followed Pluck's every movement with bitter hatred in their depths.

"I won't harm you if you give no signal," he told her, but though she remained motionless she spoke no word.

Presently the policeman in the creek broke cover and dashed for the cave. The outlaw's rifle spoke, and the officer fell face downwards and lay still. Pluck immediately fired at the loophole. He saw the outlaw's rifle flung into the air and, inferring that his shot had got home, rushed down the face of the hill, crossed the creek, and mounted the hill opposite till he reached the cave. Springing over the parapet he confronted a levelled revolver held by the Indian, who lay wounded on the ground. Pluck's pistol spoke simultaneously with Obyada's; then the policeman dropped and both men lay very still.

Like a faint, far-away echo a sound gradually took shape in Pluck's consciousness. He recognized it as the crooning of the old woman, who now seemed to be singing a song of triumph. It was full daylight, and raising himself painfully on his elbow he cast a comprehensive look round. He saw the woman on the plateau, the policeman lying face downwards, and three Indians—all dead—sprawled in the cave close by him. He himself, he discovered, was badly wounded somewhere in the lower part of the body and unable to move his legs.

When night fell the crooning ceased, and through the long hours of darkness the awesome silence of the prairie hovered over the scene. Poor Pluck, tortured by the pain of his wound, hovered between wakefulness and unconsciousness.

Reinforcements, luckily, arrived with daybreak. Two of Pluck's companions, it was discovered, were dead, shot through the head. The other, like himself, was seriously wounded, while the three outlaws were stone-dead. Up on the plateau they found the body of the old lady. There was no trace of a wound upon her; she had evidently died from exhaustion and heartbreak.

As speedily as possible the dead and wounded were conveyed to Edmonton. Pluck reaching the city feverish and unconscious. When, many days afterwards, he reported at headquarters, he was still lame from his wound, and to his great regret he was finally compelled to hand in his resignation, for the R.N.W.M.P. have no use for a crippled man.

The Rum-Runner

by

E. R. SPENCER

ILLUSTRATED BY D. B. WATERS

Prohibition in the United States, as most of our readers know, has resulted in the formation of vast smuggling organizations, the members of which take all sorts of risks to deliver their contraband cargoes. Here is the story of a sea-captain's first smuggling voyage, as told to the Author in a café in St. Pierre, the French island that is the headquarters of a fleet of ships engaged in the liquor-running business.

THE islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, constituting the only colony remaining to France in the Atlantic, are situated eleven miles off the coast of Newfoundland, and about two hundred miles from Canada. Long a bone of contention between the English and French, and later a centre for the French fishing fleet, the little colony has now attained notoriety through being used as a base by the rum-runners who range the three-mile limit of the American coast. It shares with Nassau, a port in the Bahamas, the dubious honour of being the principal rendezvous of hundreds of ships (mostly sailing vessels, but some steam) engaged in this enormous illicit trade.

From May to September, 1922, I was in close contact with St. Pierre and the men who are engaged in this illegal rum-running. Some of these men had been known to me for years, and naturally I soon got to know a great deal more about the business than it would have been wise to mention in speech or in writing.

The following story is one of many which I heard at leisure around the tables in Robierre's, the Café du Nord, and Chiaveri's. Every fact mentioned in it which deals with the extent and character of the liquor-smuggling trade I can vouch for as being correct, and I have no reason to suppose that the details of Captain McB——'s story are not as correct as the more important facts embodied in it. In fact, having known Captain McB—— for years as the master of a Bank fishing vessel and a man of integrity and courage, I have no hesitation whatever in assuring the reader of the fidelity of this narrative. This also I know—that most of the experiences undergone by Captain McB—— are common to many men who have smuggled liquor inside the three-mile limit of America.

The story was told to me by Captain McB—— at the Café du Nord in St. Pierre, but the names of men and ships mentioned are, for obvious reasons, entirely fictitious.

I don't think I ever told you how I came to turn rum-runner, and what happened on my first trip. I've never cared to talk about it; there are some things about it I'd just as soon forget.

In the fall of 1920 I took the old *Dauntless* to St. Pierre to put her in dry dock. I'd had a poor year Bank fishing, and was beginning to wonder if it wasn't about time for me to cut loose from the game. I'd been at it for twenty years and still I wasn't exactly a millionaire. While I was feeling that way I happened to meet Lafroise, the broker chap, and we fell to drinking. The talk went from one thing to another, and soon I was cursing Bank fishing and grumbling about hard times.

"You know the American coast pretty well, don't you?" asked Lafroise, suddenly.

"Like a book," I told him.

"And you're a first-class sailor?"

"I'm reckoned as such by men who know," I admitted.

"Well, why don't you try smuggling liquor for a change?"

He laughed as he said it, but something in his eyes told me he was serious, and was testing me.

"Why not?" I said carelessly, "why not? But then I reckon it takes capital to start that business."

"Suppose you had capital?" he asked.

"Smuggling might seem more interesting then," I said.

"And a ship also," he went on.

"In that case I might turn my hand to it," I admitted.

"And a wage of three thousand francs a month, with a commission of a quarter

per cent. on all cargoes landed," he ended up.

"Make it American money," I said, for by that time I was wide awake.

"Well, two hundred and fifty dollars a month and commission."

"If I had a chance like that," I told him, "I'd say good-bye to Bank fishing to-morrow."

"Captain," said Lafroise gravely, "come to me in the spring." And not another word would he say.

I left St. Pierre a few days later, and I brooded over the proposition all the winter. Then, in March, I told the owners of the *Dauntless* that they'd have to find another skipper for her, and left for St. Pierre.

I arrived to find Lafroise absent in the States. When I heard that, I very nearly backed out. But I'd given up the *Dauntless* and had to find another berth of some kind, so I waited.

It was two weeks, and near the middle of April, before Lafroise got back. By that time I was getting uneasy. The second morning after he reached St. Pierre I bearded him in his office.

"I've called about that proposition you made last fall," I said, getting to business at once.

"Ah, yes. Sit down, Captain," he said, and smiled. "So you've decided in favour of it?"

"I have," I told him, "providing the terms are the same and that I'm satisfied with the ship."

"The terms are the same," he said; "and the ship is the *Waterwitch*."

"I couldn't wish for a better," I said enthusiastically. The *Waterwitch* was a rakish-rigged fore-and-aft schooner of about a hundred and fifty tons. She was known from Cape Race to Scatarée and from there to Cape Cod as one of the smartest ships in the Bank fishing fleet. Seven years old only she was, and six of them had been spent on the Banks.

"But how long has she been in the trade?" I asked. "It's the first I've heard of it. And what's happened to Billy Waters, her skipper?"

"She's been in the trade a year," said Lafroise. "Captain Waters died on her last trip. Some trouble with his crew, we think, but we couldn't prove anything against them. He was buried at sea."

That sobered me for a while. Then I went ahead. "Let's get down to business," I said; and he drew up the papers.

I was to be responsible for ship and cargo, my name appearing as owner and master. That meant that if I was caught I stood to get a long stretch in jail, and perhaps worse. But I knew I couldn't get a job like that without taking the risks that go with it, so I signed.

"You'll clear for Nassau," he said. "The ship's been ready these three weeks. You'll make for the New York coast and hang well off Montauk Point until the night of the twenty-first, when you'll run in to the three-mile limit. There you'll heave to and at ten o'clock show a flare once every five minutes for half an hour. At the end of that time a launch from the shore will signal you if all's well. Her green light will be higher than her red. If you don't pick her up the first time you signal, jog up and down off the coast and then run in again within an hour and repeat. If she still doesn't answer, slack sheet and make for sea as fast as you can, for there will be trouble waiting in that vicinity. When you pick up the launch's signals, run inside the 'limit' until she boards you. The man in charge will then give you your orders. He'll be the representative of the men who own the cargo. Do you understand so far?"

"I do," I told him, "but to make sure just put it in writing."

He did so. "You'll sail in two days—on the sixteenth," he ordered.

"What about a crew?" I asked.

"The ship has a full crew, the same she had last year."

"Do you mean to say I've got to take over the men you suspect killed poor Waters?" I demanded.

"Yes," he said.

"I'm hanged if I can see the sense of that," I told him, feeling hot under the collar.

"Keep cool," advised Lafroise, "and listen to me. The crew are picked men. Scoundrels, I admit, but they know the trade from beginning to end. You're a green hand, and it won't hurt you to have men at the back of you who are experienced. If, when you've run a few cargoes, you still want to get rid of them, you can do so; but until then it's wiser to stick to them. You never know who you are getting in St. Pierre these days, and a new crew might lose you your command and your liberty on the very first trip."

"Looking at it that way, of course, there's something in it," I said, "but I don't like it."

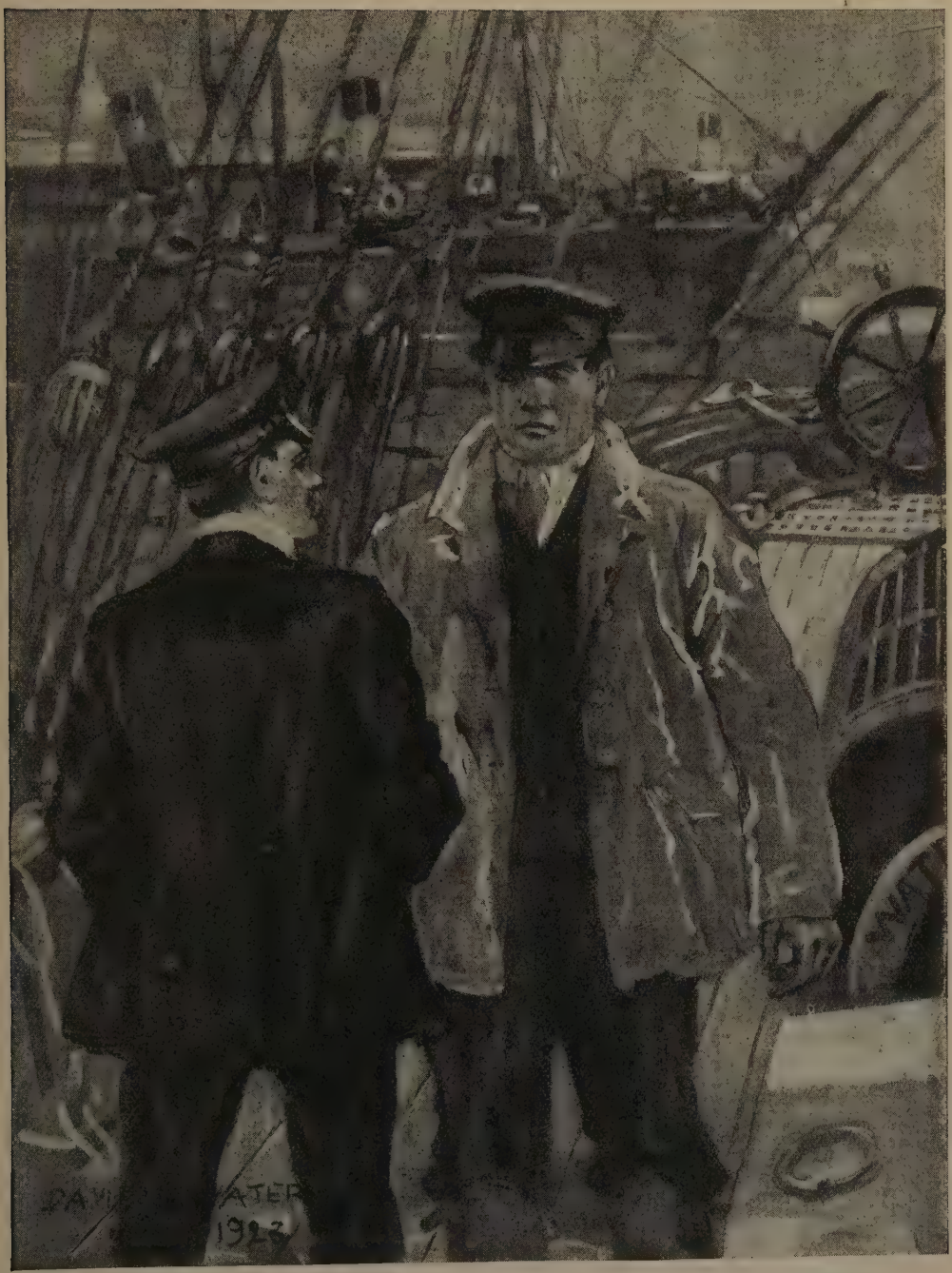
"You'll get used to it. And remember this—we can prove nothing. I'd advise you not to let them think you suspect anything. And I'd handle the mate gently at first. He's been expecting to take charge, and he'll be disappointed."

"There'll be trouble with him for certain."

"Well, I wouldn't have given you the ship if I hadn't thought you could handle the crew," he said, with a kind of sting in his words.

"As to that," I snapped, "I've handled a few tough crews before now."

"Exactly. And that's what makes me think you'll make good at the trade," he went on. "I'm banking on your knowledge of men and ships. The rest you'll soon pick



"'I take it you're the mate?' 'I am,' he answered, and he wasn't smiling."

up. But remember this—one lost cargo, and you're finished."

"I understand," I said; "and seeing I'm looking for a good commission, no cargo of mine will be lost easy."

"Good," he said. "That's all. Call for your papers to-morrow morning. In the meantime, knock about the waterfront and cafés and meet some of the men in the business. Mention my name. They'll give you good tips."

I left him and made for the quay, where I

hailed a boat and had myself put aboard the *Waterwitch*.

When I climbed over her rail only two of the crew were on deck. I asked for the mate, and one of them stepped forward. A giant of a man he was, about six feet tall, a fathom wide, and as thick as a bullock.

"I'm your new skipper," I said. "I take it you're the mate?"

"I am," he answered, and he wasn't smiling.

"Beale, by name," I went on.

"Right," he answered.

"Very well, Beale," I said. "Muster the crew, and perhaps I'd better remind you at once that I'm used to being called 'sir' by my mate."

"Aye, aye, sir," he choked, and hurried for'ard.

It took the crew five minutes to get on deck. And what a crew! Six of them there were, including the mate, who was a Gloucester man. Two of them were Swedes, one a mulatto, the other two were north coast of Newfoundland men.

I'd never used a belaying-pin or a pair of knuckle-dusters on a man in my life—my fists are big enough—but when I looked over that crew I began to think I'd need nothing less than a six-foot bar of iron to whip them into shape.

I began by telling them I was their new skipper. Then I mentioned how slow they'd been in getting on deck.

"No doubt you're a little tired after laying up all winter," I said, "but I'll be expecting you to move quicker from this time on."

Then I went aft, and the mate followed. We arranged the watches, and I agreed to advance the crew money for the rest of the time we were in port.

Then I talked to Beale straight from the shoulder. I told him I was depending on him to get the best he knew how out of the crew, and that I'd have no man on board who didn't know how to jump at an order. I mentioned the date we were to sail, and indicated what I wanted done before that time.

He listened glumly to it all (I never saw him smile but once), but when I was through, he said "Aye, aye, sir," as smartly as you'd wish, and I went on shore feeling I'd made a good start.

Although I hadn't mentioned it to Lafroise, I'd been getting acquainted with the men in the game for two weeks. Tom Belbin, Bill Henry, and Jack Strang were fellows I'd known for years—Belbin as the master of a Bank fishing boat, and the other two as men engaged in the coastal coal and lumber trade. They introduced me to others, and in two weeks I'd picked up a great deal of information as to the right way to run a cargo. Belbin had lost one ship and been in jail, but was still money in pocket. Henry had been caught and fined for having a small consignment of liquor on board; Strang had never been caught at all. He usually ran to Sydney and Glace Bay, taking small lots of liquor hid under the ballast in the hold and false floors in the forecastle and cabin. The others were in bigger business, such as I was going to attempt myself.

As soon as I got ashore I went to my boarding house, settled up a few scores, bought some tobacco and other things I needed, and sent my box on board. Later I went to Robierre's to meet Belbin and the rest of the bunch and let them know my luck. I found Henry and Strang in a little room on the second floor, and learned from them that Belbin had left unexpectedly. He had a load of "Martell" for the New Jersey coast.

Then I told them my news, and for the next three hours we spoke of signals and revenue cutters, and I listened to advice on unloading, keeping the crew "dry," and when to "make in," and how.

"That's the trick—making-in and unloading," said Henry. "The cutters are cute, and they'll be sure and pick up a signal if it's too obvious. That's the reason I always wait half an hour or so after I've picked up the launches' signals before I make inside the 'limit.' You'll soon get hold of the ropes. There's two things to remember: Never let daylight catch you inside the 'limit,' and never act suspicious when there's any kind of a ship in sight, but keep on a straight course."

We sailed on the morning of the sixteenth. I'd intended to leave at dawn, but the mate didn't get the crew aboard till late, and by the time we'd sobered the worst of them it was sun-up.

We ran through Hell's Mouth with as pretty a breeze behind us as one could wish for, and in less than forty-eight hours we logged over three hundred miles. Then, as there was no hurry, I slackened her pace a bit for the next day or two, sauntering along until the twentieth, when I headed for Long Island, heaving-to fifty miles off it that night.

Towards dusk next day we began to creep towards land, and at ten o'clock we picked up Montauk Point light. I rammed the schooner well in to the 'limit,' where I gave the order to heave to. It was a dirty night. There was a strong off-shore wind, with rain, and the tops were blowing off the waves. I sent two men to the mastheads and two more to the bows, while the mate got the flares ready.

Sharp on time we showed our signals, one of the crew timing them. Eleven o'clock came and no sign of the launch's answering signals. I was getting uneasy and about to slack sheet, when the mate sighted lights to windward. They bore down on us, and after a while we could see the form of a boat

with her green light higher than her red. Then a flare showed, and the mate came down, saying that was our signal.

We waited, and in a little while two launches slipped up alongside and hailed us. We gave the word and they came aboard. Ten men stepped on deck and the biggest of them asked for the captain. I made myself known to him, and he gave me the written order to unload.

"I'll take charge if you don't mind, Captain," he said.

"Go ahead," I told him. Rafferty was his name.

"All lights out," he ordered, and the lights on launches and ship were cloaked. In ten minutes the hatches were off and some of my crew and half-a-dozen other men were in the hold. I took the wheel, and two men went to the masthead to watch for cutters.

Then, in the pouring rain and darkness, with the wind howling miserably about us and the coast lights flaring in the distance, we began to unload the stuff. Case after case passed over the rail, and before long the launches were as deeply laden as was safe, with five hundred cases apiece on board.

"Keep jogging along just outside the limit, Captain," said Rafferty. "We'll try and make two trips to-night, for it's a wild one and there are not likely to be any cutters about."

Then they cast off, and I kept the *Waterwitch* just outside the line. The wind stiffened a bit an hour later, and I doubted if the launches would be able to come out again. However, I held on, thinking they might appear. But when two o'clock struck and there was no sign of them, I began to get uneasy, and when the first bit of light showed under the edge of the sky I gave word to slack the sheets and swung the ship off before the wind, not heaving to till we were well out of sight of the coast.

There we hung about until the next night, when we made in again, this time with pleasant weather, although the wind was still off-shore and gusty. We picked up the launches without any trouble, and Rafferty came aboard again. As I thought, there had been too much sea the night before to risk the second trip. But we made two trips of it that night, and I headed the *Waterwitch* out to sea, feeling happy. We'd had no trouble at all so far. Everything had gone like clockwork—signals, launches, discharging and all—and I was beginning to think we'd make a mighty quick trip of it. And so we should have done if the weather hadn't turned on us. In the afternoon the wind freshened, and just before night it came down a living gale, and we had to heave the schooner to, and tear the sails off her. She rode it out well until morning; then the seas coming over her bows threatened to sink her, and to save her we had to turn tail and run before it. That gale blew us four hundred miles out to sea before it eased up, and when we hove to to try and get back it died away until it was nearly a flat calm. That was the first of my troubles, and no light one, for the longer we were unloading, the greater the risk. And we had the bulk of our cargo untouched.

It was about this time that I noticed the mate was getting a little too free in his manner, and the crew often went to him for orders when they should have come to me. I didn't say anything, although I had to knock a grin off the mouth of one of the Swedes one day when I cancelled an order the mate had given him.

Then, on the second day we were beating back to the land, the same man answered me back when I found fault with his work.

"You've been drinking," I told him, after I'd knocked him down, "and you know my orders about no drinking at sea."

I gave the wheel to the mate and went for'ard. If the crew had whisky in the forecastle it meant trouble, and the sooner the stuff was out of it the better.

I got down for'ard, and there in the half-darkness I found the mulatto and the other Swede drunk. I ordered the cook to light a lamp so that I could see their faces. Then I went ahead and beat them sober. I didn't mind taking advantage of their being drunk; they weren't that kind of men. As it was, they made it hot for me for a while, but I managed them, and when we'd put them in their bunks I ordered the cook to fetch out any whisky that was left. There were two bottles of it, and I carried them aft.

"I don't think there'll be any more trouble of *that* kind," I told the mate as I took the wheel from him.

He didn't answer for a minute, but if ever a man's eyes turned green with hate his did.

"Waters didn't mind us having a drink now and then," he growled.

"Yes, and he's dead," I answered. He turned on me in a flash, and just stopped his hand in time as it went to his sheath-knife.

"What do you mean?" he asked, his breath coming quickly.

"I mean what I said," I told him. "Waters is dead, and I'm master of this ship. And if any cross-eyed son of a sea-cook begins to think different there's going to be trouble!"

He slouched for'ard without a word. But from that moment I was on my guard. I didn't trust the man and I wasn't sure of the crew.

We made in to land three nights later and picked up the launches the second time of signalling. Rafferty was in a terrible state when he came aboard. He had thought we must have gone down in the storm. And, to make things worse, he'd heard of a coming raid on that part of the coast within a week or ten days.

That made us sweat, for we wanted to

be unloaded by that time. We landed fifteen hundred cases that night, and when he left, Rafferty told me to make in and pick up the launches every night from that time on, if it was humanly possible. I was as eager as he to do that, so, although the next two nights were muggy and wet, we ran in and continued to unload.

It was wearying work for the nerves, and I aged years every time we sighted a suspicious-looking ship. But we were lucky and never sighted even the smoke of a cutter.

Then came the night when we'd only twenty-five hundred cases left, and Rafferty wanted to make an end of it. We ran in a little earlier than usual and got the first loads off quickly. Then the sea began to get a little choppy and the sky hung low, bringing the wind on top of us. The launches got back all right, however, and though they chewed up every fender we had on board while we were doing it, we loaded them and cast off.

"The mulatto took him by the throat before he could say more."

"Stick inside," shouted Rafferty as he was leaving; "we'll send another boat to you before daylight, and you can finish it." There were only two hundred and fifty cases left in the hold.

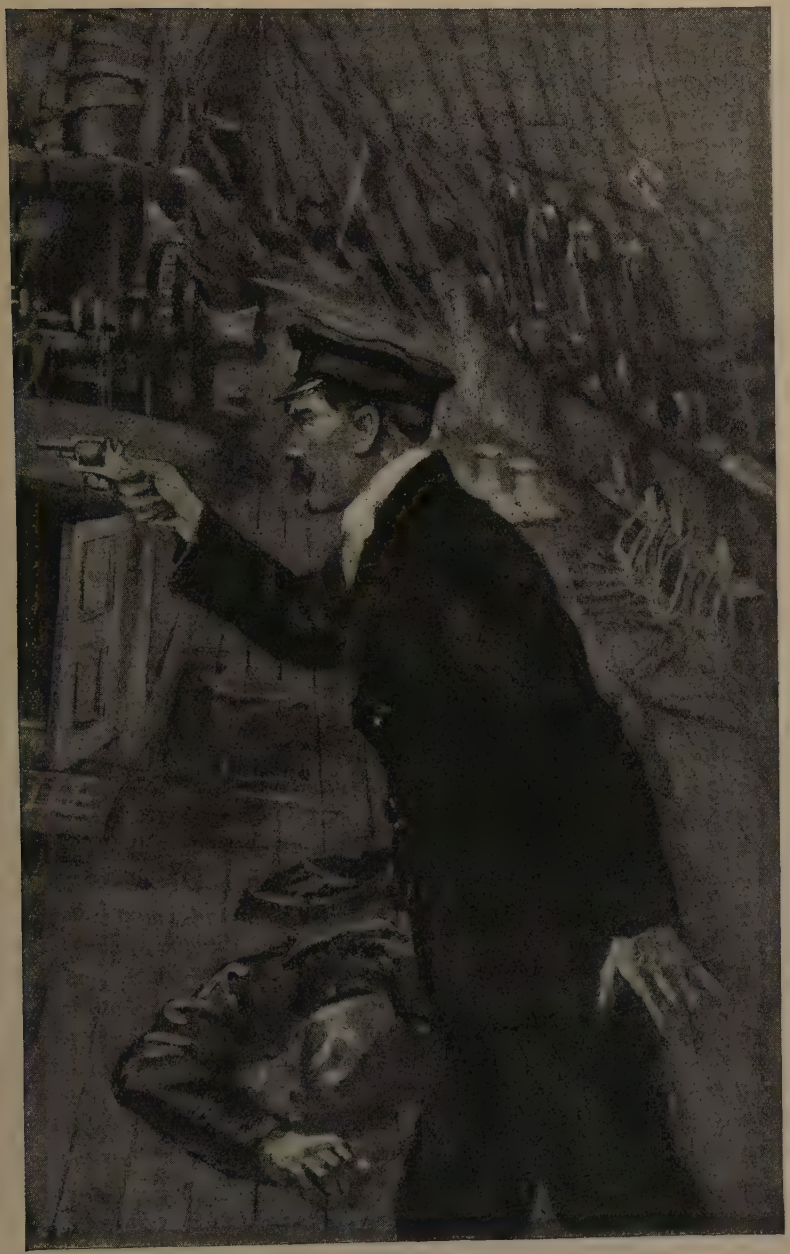
I wanted to make an end of it myself, so, although it was a big risk, I kept the *Waterwitch* jogging. When an hour went by and there was no sign of a boat, I began to get uneasy. Dawn would break in less than another sixty minutes.

I should have left then, but I didn't; I hung on. Finally the crew began to fidget and the mate came aft.

"I'd leave if I was you, skipper," he said. "If daylight finds us in these waters we're done for."

"I'll wait for Rafferty," I said, and a stubborn streak in me kept me doing that foolish thing.

The mate went for'ard and the crew



gathered in a bunch. I didn't like the looks of that, so I ordered one man to the masthead and another to the bow. The mate I called aft. None of them moved for a minute; then I saw the mate nod his head to them, and they came aft on the run.

"Mutiny!" I shouted, and put my hand to my coat pocket, where I'd carried a gun for days.

What happened came with a rush. I shouted out to them to get for'ard, but they only jeered at me and brandished belaying pins in the air. The mate led them, and when I saw they meant business I drew the gun, although Heaven knows I didn't want to. They stopped when they saw that. Then the mate cursed them for cowards and rushed me, the rest following. I shot him dead.

That shot sounded like a cannon, and the crew shrank back, hesitating.

I knew the position was ticklish; I'd only two shots left. I raised the gun again to try and keep them in check. As it happened, the muzzle was pointing straight for the cook. He turned white and drew back. "Don't shoot, skipper, for Heaven's sake," he begged. "I can tell you——"

The mulatto took him by the throat before he could say more. But the cook was crazy with fear. He tore the negro's hands away. "The mate—Waters," he gasped. Then someone stunned him.

What would have happened then if nothing had intervened is hard to say. But dawn had crept on us unawares, and one of the crew—perhaps with the thought of some such thing in his mind—suddenly spied a streak of smoke to windward.

"A cutter!" he shouted—and the crew forgot their mutiny.

I seized the moment.

"Station your stays," I shouted, and every man leapt to his post.

We slacked off our sheets and the *Water-*

witch ran out to sea "with a bone in her teeth." There was plenty of wind, thank goodness, but even so the cutter's hull soon appeared and she began to gain on us. She signalled us to heave to. For answer we piled on sail till the spars threatened to blow out of the ship, but despite all our efforts the cutter gained. I was nearly wild to think I'd been such a fool as to allow daylight to catch me in those waters. Presently the foresail blew off her, but I refused to take in any more sail. If we were going to be captured we'd have a run for our money.

All things must come to an end, and it looked as though we were done for when a miracle happened. We sighted a bank of fog rolling in to the land. It was a race then, and we just made it. We reached the fog, and the cutter faded away behind. Then we altered our course and never slacked sheet for ten hours.

When I thought the danger was past, I hove the ship to and called the crew aft.

"I've got evidence enough to hang the lot of you," I told them. "There's no doubt in my mind that you killed poor Waters. The words of the cook prove it."

"You're wrong, skipper," said the mulatto.

"'Twas the mate," put in the cook, and the others cursed him for a yellow dog.

"Maybe it was," I said, "but you all had a hand in it. And then there's mutiny. You all know what that means. Hang or go to jail, it's all one to me. You'll do one or both if I give the word. But I'm willing to overlook everything on one condition. I killed the mate because he mutinied, and I should be cleared of blame in any court. But you know, and I know, the reasons why I don't want to go to court. It wouldn't be healthy for any of us. So I'm going to enter in the log that the mate was knocked overboard by the main-boom. And my condition for keeping my own mouth shut and not logging the lot of you is that you keep yours shut, too. You can back up my statement about the mate or you can tell the truth. Then I'll find occasion to say a few words myself. Take your choice."

They consulted among themselves.

"That's fair enough," said the mulatto, who was their spokesman. "Mum's the word."

"You've chose wisely," I said. "And now listen to me. The first man I suspect of mutiny in any form I'll shoot at sight. I'll have no double dealing aboard my ship."

That ended the trouble. We buried the mate a little later with a piece of pig iron tied to his feet and a double roll of four-ounce duck about his body. And when I thought of Billy Waters, one of the best men who ever walked a quarterdeck, I had no regrets.

"Life for life," I thought, and no court of justice could make it fairer.

We didn't attempt to land the little whisky we had left. It was a small lot, and as I suspected that part of the coast would be closely watched for awhile, I decided it would pay me and the owners if I made for port. So I did.

When I got back to St. Pierre I told Lafroise everything.

"You're well out of that," he said. "And you did the right thing. There would be little use in trying to prove anything against the crew in the case of poor Waters, even if we dared He's dead, anyhow, and the matter might as well rest there. There's one satisfaction—the man who killed him paid for it. As to the whisky left, we can let that go in with the next cargo. But what are you going to do about the crew?"

"I'll discharge the cook," I said. "He's yellow. And I'll sign on two good men of my own choosing. With a cook in the forecastle I can trust, and a mate I can rely on, there'll be little need to worry about the rest of them."

"I don't think so either," said Lafroise. Then he took up a pen and wrote me out a cheque for my wages and commission on the trip.

And what the risks of the business hadn't done, that cheque did. The spirit of the thing entered into my blood, and I knew that while there was such money to be made there would be one man at least ready to take the risks that go with it. I've been at the game ever since—and shall be till I'm caught, or sunk, or smuggling goes out of fashion.

SOLIMAN THE SEER

The Author vouches absolutely for the truth of this curious story. It would be interesting to know if any of our readers who have visited Egypt have come across the mysterious fortune-teller of the Pyramid of Cheops.

by Oliver Read

ILLUSTRATED BY W. C. NICOLSON

"TALKING of King Tutankhamen's tomb reminds me of that amazing adventure we had in the tomb in the Great Pyramid," said Neville. "Do you remember?"

"When that old Pharaoh fellow told our fortunes?" I inquired.

"Yes," replied Neville; "a chap could write a book about that."

I agreed. I can't write a book, but here is the adventure, set down just as it happened to us.

Early in 1918, my friend Neville and I were at the Flying School in Heliopolis, Cairo. One Sunday we decided to go to Gizeh to see the Pyramids. We had long looked forward to the opportunity.

"Let's hire a gharry and drive out in style," proposed Neville.

"Well, let's wait till to-night," said I. "There'll be a fine moon."

"Splendid!" assented Neville.

Knowing him well, I added: "By the way, have you got any money?"

Neville hadn't any money. He never had. So I must confess that we travelled to the Pyramids by tramcar!

Arrived at Gizeh, we dodged the leech-like attentions of the horde of so-called guides and other *backsheesh* rascals by avoiding the main track and making a detour to the Pyramids. When we came to the Sphinx, therefore, smiling serenely in her sandy depression, the tide of trippers, photographers, native pedlars, and profiteers was at the ebb, and we could pay our respects to the imperishable monuments of Egypt's kings in comparative silence and dignity.

Neville said it was "too much fag" to walk up the face of the Pyramids; he was a fellow who always wanted to see the "inside" of things. We had kept up our fierce attitude towards the impudent guides, but were touched at last by the persistent appeals of one bright-eyed blackamoor, clad only in a pair of puttees and a shirt. In wonderful English this child beseeched us to "do him the honour to permit him to conduct us into the inside of Cheops."

"Me very good guide, oh yes, *bimbashi*," he urged. "My farder him guide; his farder him guide; always we been very good guides, *bimbashi*. Tell everything!"

"It seems to run in your family," said Neville. "Who pushed the nose off the Sphinx? Can you tell us that, Abdullah?"

For some reason this question caused the black imp to double up with laughter. "Who knocked him nose off Sphinx? Sphinx him neber did hab nose, I tink! Allah knows!"

"You're the first fellow I've met who didn't blame it on Napoleon," said Neville, pleased. "Tell me," he went on, perching himself on one of the huge blocks of stone at the base of the Great Pyramid; "how did Cheops manage to build this family vault?"

When Abdullah grasped the meaning of this question, he laughed loudly again. Apart from his profound store of hereditary knowledge, it was his sharp sense of humour that attracted us. "Pyramid no built for bury him," explained the boy. "Pyramid built for tell the time. Pyramid make big, big shadow. Pyramid say: it time to dig ground; pyramid say: it time to put him seed in ground. Pyramid made for tell the time."

Had Abdullah worn a fez and a flowing robe in place of the puttees and shirt, we could not have regarded him with greater respect. "Give him a piastre," Neville instructed me, "and he shall show us wonderful things!"

So Abdullah became our guide. Following his fluttering shirt, we soon found ourselves penetrating into the Great Pyramid through a sort of fissure in the outer wall. The imp whispered to us that it was a secret way in.

"Give him another piastre," said Neville; "it's worth it."

The daylight failed fast as we advanced, until finally we stood—or rather crouched—in the narrow passage, feeling for each other in utter darkness. So slippery was the stone floor that we clung to the rough-hewn walls and groped our way onward foot by foot. Soon the roof sloped so low that we were forced to our knees. At this point Abdullah sprang a surprise. We heard the striking of a match and an instant later we saw everything sharply outlined in a blinding flare.

"Magnesium ribbon!" said Neville, as the light expired, plunging us into profound blackness. "Light up another bit, Abdullah."

The child informed us that his supply was small and cost much money—five milliemes an inch. "Give him another piastre," said Neville, "or we shall never get out of the place alive."

On we crawled with Abdullah ahead. All at once our tunnel, or rat-hole, as Neville called it, widened into a kind of apartment, filled with a faint light that appeared to filter through the stone corridors dimly discerned. Very cautiously and thankfully we got up and rubbed our knees; then moved forward with growing confidence—"ready for anything," as Neville put it.

"Who's that merchant shadowing us?" he asked suddenly.

I, too, felt there was a fourth person hovering about in the shrouded surroundings. Abdullah answered our question with another:—

"*Bimbashi* like hear Soliman tell all what happen *bimbashi* to-morrow, next day, oh yes?"

As the boy spoke, a robed figure became visible before us, like a picture on a screen. This apparition had two live coals for eyes, set in a mummified face. While he gazed at us we stood transfixed. Then, without a sound, he seemed to melt away in the mysterious gloom.

"Rummy beggar!" exclaimed Neville. "And what eyes! Is that the fortune-teller? I feel he knows all about my dreadful past. Let's get him to peer into our brilliant future!"

Soliman, it soon transpired, had his office, furnished severely with a couple of sandbags and a candle, in an empty tomb! By the look of him he ate his rice, smoked his bubbly pipe, and slept there as well. Encouraged by Abdullah, we dropped down into the shallow excavation and took our seats in trembling state on the sandbags. At the other end squatted the seer, like a graven image; his face was in shadow and his peering eyes were downturned, fixed on the little space that separated us. Abdullah stood solemn and reverent throughout the weird proceedings. For my part, I no longer felt inclined to laugh; the attitude of the mummy-like Soliman was so awesome and the whole atmosphere so uncanny.

With his long pointed finger-nail our prophet drew a circle in the dust of the tomb; then he resumed his statuesque posture.

"*Bimbashi* put him one money in the ring," prompted Adbullah.

"Read, old man, a bit of palm silver," said Neville.

When I placed a five-piastre piece in the centre of the ring, Soliman instantly stirred into life. His finger began to draw lines or rays from the circle, at equal distances, spoke fashion, seven in all. Over these rays he made a few passes and murmured an incantation; then once more he became immovable, with his inscrutable eyes fixed on his cabalistic design.

"*Backsheesh,*" whispered Abdullah.

To my surprise—and relief—Neville himself pulled out a coin and laid it at the end of the ray that pointed towards him.

Again Soliman returned to life. After a little mumbling, maybe at the size of the coin, he drew around it a tiny ring. Then he went counting with his claw-like finger, gibbering to himself meanwhile, around the circle, from one ray to the next, stopping at the fifth. In a clear English that startled us he pronounced:—

"Fear not, *effendi*. In what you wish, you have success."

"He must mean you," said Neville. "You put the five piastres down. And for me, O Soliman, what do you see?"

Once more the old ancient went counting and mumbling round the circle; to stop finally and announce:—

"A woman. I see a woman. Fair. Fair."

I felt Neville give a little jump. He grunted, pulled out a second coin, and placed it in the circle with the question: "When shall I see her again?"

Still gazing intently at his drawings in the sand, Soliman rose majestically to his sandalled feet.

"Three months and twenty-five days," he droned. "The *effendi* will be home in three months and twenty-five days."

Neville laughed, though in a strained sort of way. The spell was broken. We scrambled up out of the tomb.

"Three months and—Why, that will be about May," reckoned Neville, as we followed Abdullah to the exit. "Stop! I want to ask the old Johnny one more question!"

Swiftly though we turned back, there was no sign of Soliman. The tomb was quite bare; the soil at the bottom was without a trace of the mystic symbols described there only a few moments since by the fortune-teller.

On the way back to Heliopolis, Neville was uncommonly quiet. Only one comment escaped him on our experience in the tomb.

"I wonder," he said, as if merely amused,

"whether the old Johnny meant calendar months or lunar months?"

"These things are generally reckoned by the moon," I answered. "We shall see."

A few days later Neville came to me jubilant with the news that he had been "passed out" at the School and was to begin actual flying at the near-by aerodrome. His happiness was short-lived, however, for the English mail brought him news that his father lay seriously ill.

"I ought to put in an application for home leave," said Neville; "though no leave is being granted just now. I have a feeling I should get it."

I looked at him in surprise, and he nodded. "Yes," he admitted, "I have a feeling there is some truth in what the fortune-teller told us. Isn't it ridiculous? Let's go and see him again."

On the Sunday, therefore, away we went once more to the Great Pyramid.

"'Me very good guide, oh yes,' he urged."

In the absence of Abdullah we began to despair of finding the seer. Our entrance appeared to me to be by a different and more direct passage, though Neville declared it was the same. Certainly we failed to find the shallow empty tomb, the haunt of Soliman, but at last we got a glimpse of his shadowy figure. Before we had touched him or spoken, he turned on us abruptly and drew us aside into a niche or recess in the wall.

"Soliman is all wise," greeted Neville, placing a gift in his shrivelled palm.

"The *effendi* would ask a question," Soliman replied; and I thought he smiled. Looking Neville between the eyes, with an intentness that held him silent, he presently announced:—

"I see death."

Neville's lips moved, as if repeating the words, but he made no sound.

"I see death," repeated the seer, still facing us and moving slowly backwards. "And I see life. Death is life."

With a visible effort my friend turned his face from the fortune-teller's gaze and stared at me. When we looked for Soliman he had vanished.

"Phew!" gasped Neville. "It's jolly hot in here! Let's go along and get some tea."

Neville was very proud when, some days later, he announced to me that his first solo flight was to be made early the following morning. In spite of my eagerness to witness his performance, it was late when I arrived at the hangars. All the machines were "out." While I was following the course of the low-flying planes and trying vainly to distinguish Neville, suddenly, to my horror, there was a burst of flame, a swift trail of fire and smoke rushing earthward across the blue of the sky, and, almost in the same instant, a twisted mangled heap was all that remained of one of the beautiful machines.

As I sped, with others, across the 'drome to the scene of the tragedy, I heard the name "Neville." My heart turned cold. My friend Neville! "I see death," the seer had said. "Death!" Then, with a thrill of hope, I recalled Soliman's first words: "You will be home in three months and twenty-five days." No, I told myself, as I reached the spot, it was not, it *could* not be Neville

"I turned furiously to face—Neville himself!"

whom they would find there tangled with the smouldering wreckage!

The words ran mockingly in my brain, "Home in three months and twenty-five days," and I was pushing my way frantically through the helpless group around the charred ruin, when a hand clutched at me. I turned furiously to face—Neville himself!

He had overslept—he always overslept; was too late for his flight and another man had taken his turn in the machine!

"Ah, well, if it had been me," said Neville later, "I should not have crashed. I'm to be home in three months and twenty-five days."

"I wouldn't joke about it," said I.

"I wasn't joking," returned Neville. "I was going to tell you that my application for leave has gone through. The trouble is ships are so scarce that very few passages are being granted just now. I have to wait my turn; may be weeks—or months. Three months and twenty-five days! It would be a strange coincidence, wouldn't it?"

A cablegram awaited Neville at the orderly room. His father was dead.

"'I see death,'" murmured Neville, as he handed me the message. "Strange!"

"'And death is life,'" I added.

Neville heard no more of his home leave, and after a hopeful interval, he received orders to proceed to Palestine.

"Well, good-bye, old boy," he said, on the eve of his departure. "It was an odd coincidence, that's all. It's me for the desert. Good-bye!"

"You've two months to go yet," was all I said.

He laughed and went on packing his kit.

But my friend never went to Palestine. There he was next day seated calmly at the mess table.

"I got a last moment reprieve," he grinned. "I'm for France. Mud instead of sand!"

A happy Neville wished me good-bye as I helped him with his kit into the train for Alexandria, there to embark for France—*via* England.

"I'll be home long before May," cried Neville, "but thank Soliman for me all the same!"

As the train started: "Send me word when you sail!" I cried.

"Not allowed!" he called back. "But I'll let you know somehow. Good-bye!"

A week passed, and another. Neville, I gathered from his censored letters, waited and waited at "Alex." for a passage. He spoke no more of being home "before the time."

At last I received an innocent picture postcard. There was not a word on it, but I understood. Neville had sailed, homeward bound. The postcard bore a picture of the Pyramid!

It was in May that I heard of the death by drowning of my friend Neville. The official routine report simply stated: "Missing." Unofficially it was understood that one more vessel had been torpedoed. Neville was among those whose names were on the passenger list and who had failed to answer the roll-call of survivors.

Yet, deep in my heart, I could not believe him dead, and this feeling grew. I thought of writing to him. He lived at Cambridge—so much I knew—but before I could obtain his full address I left Egypt for Italy.

Time is a great test of faith—and friendship—and I must confess that I had almost forgotten the very name of Neville, when one day—long, long after our experience in the Pyramid—I ran into Neville himself. He was just going down into an Underground station in London.

"Man alive!" I cried. "But you are dead!"

How he laughed! Certainly he was very much alive. Though I was on my way to keep an appointment, I was quite unable to resist him. "Here's our train!" he said, keeping a vice-like grip on my arm. "You've got to come right home with me and meet my—— But I'll tell you all about it as we go along."

Yes, Neville *had* been drowned, he explained—"officially" drowned. Actually his name was on the nominal roll of the ill-fated vessel, but he himself was not aboard. At the moment when Neville should have embarked—he almost had his foot on the gangway—a native boy had tumbled into the dock, and Neville, in his impetuous way, had made an effort to save him. Through this delay Neville had had to find a place aboard one of the other vessels forming the convoy. The ship that carried him "officially" was lost by enemy action on the very first night of the homeward voyage.

"So you see," concluded Neville, "everything panned out according to Soliman's schedule. From the date of our visit to the Pyramid to the happy day I set foot once more in England was exactly three months and twenty-five days!"

"And the fair woman?" I asked.

"Yes, and the fair woman," said Neville, with a tenderness that I had not known in him.

"We've a boy," he added shyly, and proudly. "It's all so strange. You see, the boy is exactly like his grandfather," Neville went on. "Exactly like my father who died, you remember, while I was in Egypt. Put the picture of our boy beside the picture of my father in the old family album—taken when he was quite a child; and the features of the one—especially the remarkable expression of the eyes—are the features of the other! Isn't it odd?"

A Mongol milkmaid.

THE CHILDREN OF THE WILDERNESS

A journey in little known Mongolia

by

JULIET BREDON

The Authoress needs no introduction to THE WIDE WORLD readers. In these articles she describes her visit to the picturesque nomads of Mongolia—a race of steppe-dwellers with their own peculiar manners and customs—and gives a fascinating account of the Devil Dance and the strange "Festival of the Burning of Sins."

II.—(*Conclusion*).

OUR excursion to the ruined city of Shang-tu proved most interesting, not because there was much to see beyond a few crumbling walls, but for the sake of the historical associations connected with the place. Ruins in Mongolia are extremely rare, as the Mongols have built little that can go to ruin. Still it is curious that what was once the summer capital of Kublai Khan—a world-famous city praised by travellers and sung by poets—should be so utterly desolate. Not a trace remains of the palaces or pleasure parks, and all the magnificence and luxury of the Mongol Court, which would be remarkable even in our time, have vanished. We must go to the dusty pages of Marco Polo for pictures of the mighty hunting expeditions that Kublai organized at Shang-tu—the days when ten thousand beaters drove in the game, when the great Khan, accompanied by ten thousand falconers, travelled to the hunting grounds in a palanquin, lined with gold and covered with lion-skins, carried

by four elephants. Ten thousand tents formed his camp, and the Imperial reception tent accommodated one thousand persons who feasted within walls hung with sable and ermine. On festival days five thousand elephants, "caparisoned with bright coloured cloth on which birds and beasts were represented," bore caskets containing the Emperor's plate and furniture, and were followed by camels laden with choice viands.

Nowadays the only living human beings who remain on the site of all this splendour are the community of monks in the Monastery of the "Hundred and Eight Wells," belonging to a living Buddha, the spiritual lord of the Buriats of Siberia. Their abbot, a cultivated man in whom the soul of romance is not dead, believes that before Kublai made Shang-tu famous, it was historically interesting as one of the halting-places of the princes who bore home the body of their mighty leader Genghis Khan. The return of the dead hero was a triumphant procession across the mountains and deserts

The walls of the ruined city of Shang-tu.

with all the pomp and state accorded to a living sovereign. The splendid funeral car had an immense bodyguard of devoted followers, who killed all strangers on sight lest they should betray the death of the Conqueror, which for the time was to be carefully hidden.

On the advice of Mongol friends, one of whom—dressed in a suit of American ready-made clothes, of which he was inordinately proud—agreed to guide us, we made a detour to see a curious stone image on the steppe. This was apparently a fragment of a bas-relief dating from one of the Liao or Khitan cities which existed near Shang-tu. Standing solitary on the plain, it appeared, in its rough-hewn presentation of a human figure, like the "babas," or stone women, which are found in South Russia and Central Asia. Experts suggest that they were funereal monuments erected by some half-forgotten race which preceded the Scythians. The image we saw had its mouth smeared with butter—a survival, perhaps, of some ancient rite of sacrifice or propitiation.

Returning to Dolonor, we were struck by the similarity of the country in these parts to the North-West Territory of Canada with its far-stretching rolling grasslands, its small lagoons, and herds of grazing stock. While on the plains we were caught in a terrific electric storm. All the morning a soft south wind had been blowing. Suddenly a small cloud shot out from among those that had been slowly banking up and discharged a signal peal of thunder. This was soon followed by the savage roar of salvoes of artillery crashing over the distant hills. The lightning ran along the ground, criss-crossing in every direction, until the plain was covered with a network of blue flames from the meshes of which escape seemed impossible. Our horses shivered with fear, breaking out in a white lather of sweat. At first they stood stock still, and then they bolted madly away—fortunately in the right direction. Presently the rain descended in torrents and the wind turned icy cold. Next hail began to fall, and every hailstone as it

A curious stone image on the steppe.

struck the ground threw up a splash like a pebble cast into a lake.

We reached Dolonor wet to the skin and half frozen. Even the Mongols, accustomed as they are to bitter surprises of climate, said they had seldom seen a worse storm. A little farther north, where the full force of the hurricane broke, many *yurts* had been carried away; two men were killed by stones raised from the ground by the terrific force of the wind, and the most unusual phenomenon of a large waterspout appeared on one of the inland lakes.

We felt no temptation to linger again in Dolonor, but started on next day for Urga. After traversing about twenty miles of sandy plain, the road became very picturesque, with deep ravines and mountain streams, for this immense country of Mongolia has many kinds of scenery and is not, as commonly supposed, all flat and treeless or all desert. Often in the distance we saw "obos," those strange stone cairns decorated with branches of trees and prayer flags which are a survival of a very primitive form of Nature worship borrowed from Shamanism, the Black Faith. They generally mark some danger in the traveller's path such as a ford or a mountain pass—in short, any natural difficulty. Even a desert waste is sometimes divided into stages by "obos" erected by the zealous adherents of Nature worship. From our own experience, we understood the superstitious dread which the Mongol has of the atmospheric convulsions which tear his hills and valleys—all the more so as he depends on Nature for everything he needs. The Lama priests have cunningly adopted this cult of fear into their own faith, and they preside at the ceremonies around the "obos" though they have modified the ancient custom of living sacrifices. Nowadays a fine pony, without blemish, is dedicated to the Spirit and then allowed to go free and never afterwards mounted by human rider.

As one male member of each Mongol family becomes a priest, it is no wonder that the steppes are dotted with temples and monasteries. We stopped at several of these establishments, but nowhere did we find the

The holy city of Urga, showing the Ganden temple.

monks exerting themselves in any way. All were droning and drowsing away their lives; the only pursuit for which they showed any enthusiasm was begging. Truly the monastic system is the curse of Mongolia. When thirty per cent. of the male population, freed by law from taxes and public service, is supported in idleness by the rest and allowed, like parasites, to suck the life-blood of the community, how can the population increase or progress fail to be retarded?

Unfortunately the priests hold the people in a paralyzing grip, and there is not a single step in life which a Mongol dares take without first consulting his spiritual advisers, who proceed to oppress him by their exactions. Practically the whole life of the blind before this shrine was erected as an offering to appease the wrath of the gods, but the prayers and supplications made therein, according to the Mongols, proved efficacious. At any rate, it is curious to note that he *did* partially recover his vision. The chief treasure of the Ganden is a magnificent bronze Buddha over eighty feet high, standing on a huge pedestal of lotus petals. His altar is covered with brilliant silks and crowded with food offerings and lighted candles in huge brass candlesticks, while the walls of his sanctuary are decorated with Tibetan inscriptions in gold leaf on a blue ground, giving it a very ornate appearance.

Urga itself is more like an encampment than a city, for most of its inhabitants—even

A monastery on the steppe.

"Children of the Wilderness" revolves around their church. Its threats hold them in awe, its commands sway every action of their daily lives. On the other hand, its festivals provide their only amusements.

We saw a good example of this when, after a week's travel, we reached Urga and found what numbers of visitors were pouring into the city for the "Feast of the Burning of Sins." Many faces we recognized from Dolonor, thus proving that the Mongols are natural pilgrims and how cunningly the Lamas take advantage of this, keeping them on the move from one temple to another and gathering in offerings each time.

Urga is the great religious centre of north Mongolia and the seat of the third "Living Buddha" in the Lamaist hierarchy. It is a city of temples, all with the characteristic Chinese roofs, all painted in bright colours, and all, from a distance, very imposing-looking. The most prominent landmark is the high Ganden Temple, begun a few years ago when the "Living Buddha" was suffering from an eye disease. He nearly went

the officials, who might have Chinese houses if they chose—prefer the native felt tents, which are warmer, especially when surrounded by wooden palisades. Its historical associations all centre in the sacred mountain of "Bogdo Ula," where Genghis Khan was born, from the tribes of the Wolf and the White Doe, with a clot of blood in his hand symbolical of his mighty destiny. As his birthplace and the site of the earliest struggles for the independence of his clan, this tree-covered hill is set apart as a holy enclosure forbidden to the public and preserved as a hunting park for the great Captain when he returns to this world.

Under its shadow stands the palace of the "Living Buddha," with a magnificent view of the bare northern hills and the sparkling waters of the river Tola, which flows along in full sight for several miles before it escapes through a pass in the mountains to the west. The "Festival of the Burning of Sins" attracted such crowds that we found sight-seeing difficult. The market-place was especially animated. As long as the light lasted

Mongols and Chinese were busy bargaining, while the steppe eagles, or *berkuts*, wheeled above the crowd watching their chance to swoop down on a piece of meat carried in the hand of a returning purchaser whose other hand was busy with his rosary. In among the tents and stalls were more of the prayer-wheels such as we saw in Dolonor. These cylinders were seldom at rest while we were in Urga, and the creaking of the rusty spindles as they turned in their unoiled sockets was a characteristic sound of this Mongol Rome. And no wonder, when every man or woman passing along the streets laid hold of the inviting handle and gave a turn to each machine they found in their way!

From early morning on the feast day the open space around the temple where the ceremony was to take place was literally covered with a waiting crowd of Lamas and laymen. The Lamas were distinguished by their shaven scalps and the laymen—of sturdier physique, bigger and more muscular, with broad faces, small squat noses and prominent cheek bones—by their queues. Neither class appeared to appreciate the benefits of soap and water. To do them justice, their climate is not suitable for washing, which, they themselves say with a certain amount of truth, brings skin diseases and rheumatism, owing to the extremes of heat and cold weather and their draughty habitations.

Inside the temple the priests were preparing the "Sor," a curious offering in the shape of a triangular pyramid of dough painted red, ornamented with flame and flower designs, and topped by a dough model of a human skull. When all was in readiness, the doors were thrown open and the "Sor" exposed on a high wooden frame surrounded by thousands of butter lamps. We noticed that many pilgrims made a point of passing under the pyramid, as this act of piety is supposed to avert disaster for the year. Meanwhile an impressive service, with very fine chanting, was being held and certain magic formulas recited which empower the "Sor" to destroy the enemies of the faith. After the service the offering was carried to a pyre prepared in an open place beyond the temple precincts, followed by a solemn procession of monks in magnificent ceremonial costumes led by the abbot of the monastery. Here the high priest takes the "Sor" into his own hands and raises it above his head while the monks chant. Three times he repeats this gesture before he approaches the pyre with curious leaps and throws the offering into the flames. The terrific invocation closes with the verse, "I, the Yogatsari, have thrown the terrible Sor. Thus shall our enemies be confounded. Thus shall our sins be thrown down." The attendant Lamas then gather round their chief and offer congratulations, to which he replies, "It is fortunate for the many," meaning that thus vicariously the people are freed from their sins, their enemies, and evil spirits.

The Abbot of the monastery. The "Living Buddha" is seen on the right.

The festival concludes with racing—a favourite sport in Mongolia. One of the most picturesque features of Mongol life is the horsemanship. In their great days of conquest, the Mongols used to say that they had no country—their homes were their horses' backs—and the saying remains true to this day. No wonder then that racing is a popular pastime—how popular we judged from the fact that Mongol travellers often rode up to us on the

steppe and, looking critically over our ponies, challenged us to a race then and there. The regular Mongol race meetings, however, are conducted very differently from ours. In the first place, all the jockeys are children, often not more than eight years old. They are not allowed saddles, and it is remarkable how they keep

The "Living Buddha" system of Mongolia is very curious. The "Hutukhtus," as they are called, are supposed to be reincarnations of Lamas celebrated for their good works. When such men die they take a new birth, remember their former state, and prove their identity by using phrases characteristic of the former Buddha and

A camel-caravan crossing the dreaded Gobi Desert.

their seats on a slippery saddle-cloth only. A light rope bridle serves to guide their mounts, a heavy whip, like a policeman's baton, urges them on, and a cloth is given each rider so he may lean over and wipe the dust from the eyes and nostrils of the pony lest it injure his sight.

The Mongol racecourse is never circular like ours. At Urga it is a straight run over a stretch of very uneven and stony ground several miles in length. Endurance is scarcely less prized than speed; in fact, we were told that some of the races held out on the steppe are ten, twenty, and even fifty miles long. The little horses go at top speed all the way, and owners and spectators, among whom are the highest dignitaries of the Lama Church, ride out to meet the contestants and cheer or whip them along. Sometimes it happens that two ponies will reach the finish leaning against one another at full gallop, both so weary that if suddenly separated they would fall. At Urga the winner, often valued at thousands of dollars, is generally presented to the "Living Buddha."

We were curious to meet this sacred ruler, whom we had seen taking part in the festival of the "Sor," and hoped through friends to do so. But he sent word politely that he could not receive us, as he was seeing no visitors at the time. We were told privately that this was owing to the political situation, which obliged him to refuse audiences to certain people and made it bad policy to grant them to others. He therefore retired immediately after the ceremonies to his Mongol tent outside his regular palace.

selecting articles belonging to him from a heap of things that were not his. Great parade is made of testing the candidate, but the Lamas, of course, arrange everything beforehand and coach him, though the people and even many of the priests (carefully kept in ignorance of the fraud) believe the hoax implicitly. The present "Living Buddha" of Urga appears to be an unusually intelligent specimen of his class. Like all the higher pontiffs of the Lama Church in Mongolia, he is a Tibetan and not prepossessing in appearance, being of medium size, very dark, and cross-eyed. But he showed strong character when he refused to sign the cancellation of his country's autonomy by the Chinese, and his wife, a most superior woman, is supposed to help him considerably. Why the head of a monastic church should be allowed to have an official wife is a curious anomaly explained by the fact that he is a "bad incarnation," which does not mean that he is considered a bad man. Both "good" and "bad" incarnations of the Buddha are recognized, and the latter does not debar a candidate from filling the position of Hutukhtu if he is otherwise suitable. The clan that selects him can always control him, omnipotent though he be theoretically, for if he grows refractory he is quietly poisoned and his body laid with great ceremony among the little group of Lama tombs near the Ganden temple.

This is an unusual distinction, for a tomb in Mongolia is a great rarity. The bodies of the dead are generally laid out on the steppes at some spot designated by the priests.

Sometimes a corpse is placed on an ox-cart, and the driver urges the oxen as fast as they can go, so that, with the jolting of the uneven ground, it falls off. The driver must not look round to see where it falls, lest he anger the spirit following the corpse and thus bring ill-luck on himself and his family. Wolves, dogs, and birds of prey soon devour the corpses, leaving nothing but the bones and skulls whitening on the plain.

We were sorry to leave picturesque Urga and start back across the desert for Kalgan. Though sometimes monotonous, the desert is never dull; neither is it altogether lonely. The first day out we met a number of camel trains carrying brick tea, their drivers clothed in dirty old sheepskin coats or huddled in wadded clothes with only their heads sticking out. Their animals were not looking well, as their winter wool was beginning to fall off in patches and their humps were thin and flabby after the cold weather, when pasturage is scanty. We were told that these beasts were doing their last trip of the season, and would be turned out to pasture for July, August, and September in order to be fit for the hard winter caravan trade from Kalgan to Kiachta again. This journey takes a month, and even the camels suffer from the hardships of very little food and water.

We had heard a great deal in Peking about the famous Mongolian trotting camels, but they seemed to be very rare. A quick pace soon ruins the "ship of the desert," and in a caravan he usually does about two miles an hour for fifteen hours at a stretch. The long caravans of camels, marching in single file, are kept together by a rope attached to a wooden pin inserted in the pierced cartilage of each animal's nose and passed under the binding rope of the load of the one in front in such a way that a moderate pull loosens it without injuring the beast. The saddles consist of two felts folded round each hump with one piece between and two wooden slats outside—very curious, but very practical, and equally suitable for freight or for riders who can stand the gait, which is very fatiguing and generally makes a foreigner sea-sick.

In crossing the dreaded Gobi we met with only one untoward incident, though we made the journey under particularly disadvantageous conditions. There had been little snow and no rain for many weeks. Consequently the stunted bushes had no leaves and there was not a blade of grass anywhere—nothing but stones and sand and the famous rocks of many colours. Long stretches of the country had no wells, no tents, no inhabitants. Once our guide had great difficulty in finding the way because the high wind had shifted the sand and obliterated all caravan tracks. He finally got his bearings again in rather a curious way. After carefully examining the ground for some time, he explained that he had seen faint marks like scratches. Thus he knew that camels whose footprints were no longer visible must have passed this way, carrying bamboo rods for the horse-catchers, the ends making the "scratches."

There is something weird and depressing about travelling across the Gobi desert, where the mirages play queer tricks with one's eyes, people fade into thin air when one rides up to them, and the howl of a lonely wolf is

A Mongol encampment.

Guests arriving for the wedding.

the only sound that breaks the awful silence. Though our guide assured us that wolves in Mongolia never attack man and are only dangerous to sheep and cattle, being of such a cowardly species that even a child who shows a bold front to them can easily scare them away, we felt more secure and cheerful when we reached the bounds of the desert country and found ourselves in sight of an "*ail*," or group of *yurts*.

It is a rule of the plains that any traveller is at liberty to alight at any tent he pleases and demand admittance. A host who did not immediately offer the stranger tea would be considered outside the pale. The habit originated from the fact that Mongolia has few inns, and travellers are dependent on private individuals for shelter and refreshment. At first it seems impertinent to dismount from your horse and expect tea to be prepared and offered you free, but you must remember that the master of the tent where you have dismounted is probably likewise refreshing himself in some other man's tent miles away. Thus the hospitality received by Mongols when travelling compensates for the hospitality shown to travellers. Moreover, as communications on the steppes are rare and difficult and mostly carried by word of mouth (except along the routes covered by the messengers of the regular pony post) a chance traveller may convey important news from one *ail* to another. Thus he is welcome everywhere, being in some sense a newspaper and a postman. As most people are constantly moving about the country this system of private messages spreads news over Mongolia at great speed.

When we approached the *yurts* dogs began to bark and tent doors opened. Our guide then warned us to keep in the background while he approached and shouted "Check the dogs!" This is a warning to the villagers to come out and call off the animals, who rush at the visitor with savage growls. Every Mongol habitation has its complement of dogs, kept for guarding the herds and the *yurt*. The fiercer they are and the more dangerous to strangers the more their owners appreciate them. Mongols told me that a litter of new-born puppies will be shut up for weeks in a hole in the ground, where the strongest eats all his brothers and sisters. The surviving cannibal is then released and considered a prize animal. But for the fact that their law requires the inmates of a tent to rush out immediately when "*Nohoi*" (dogs) is called, and protect the visitors by beating off the wolfish beasts with whips, there would be serious accidents.

We were most hospitably entertained by the people of the steppes. While one daughter boiled tea for us, another went out to milk the cow, squatting on what we consider the wrong side of the animal for the purpose. We were really a godsend to these villagers, breaking the dull monotony of their lives. "You have just come in time for a wedding," said our hostess, and urged us to stay over a day and see the ceremony. We were glad to do so, and evidently the Mongols were equally pleased to have such an unusual attraction at their festivities.

While we dined they all gossiped merrily about the coming match, the presents, the feasting, and the bride and groom. The former appeared to be the daughter of a wealthy man whose flocks and herds had prospered so exceedingly that he was providing her with a handsome dowry and a head dress and gown which plainly filled the heart of our hostess with envy. The "click click" of the tools of the travelling silversmith invited for the occasion to make the ornaments sounded till late in the night, and

we won all hearts by presenting a few silver dollars, which were promptly made into buttons for the bridal trousseau.

In olden times a maiden was seized unexpectedly and carried off by the man who desired her, and it still remains the custom for a girl to pretend she does not know she is to be married even though she sews her own wedding clothes. She should shut her eyes to the arrival of provisions and of the wedding guests, which must be rather difficult when they arrive in a carriage and pair, as some did on this occasion. The bridegroom's family appeared first in an old Russian *tarantass*, followed by more distant relatives in picturesque carts.

Then the feasting began. It was rather astonishing how the fashionable ladies managed to drink and eat through the bead curtains that almost covered their faces. But *richesse oblige*, and doubtless they were repaid by the comments of their poorer sisters who could be heard whispering to one another, "Don't you think Mrs. So-and-So is worth the price of thirty oxen?"

The bridegroom only arrived late in the day, as the soothsayers, calculating the year the bride was born and the stellar influences governing her life, announced that the hour for her departure for a new home must be no other than midnight. This, of course, would be very inconvenient for travelling, but the difficulty was got over by making a start at the appointed time, going a few yards only, and then stopping at another tent to resume the trip at a more suitable hour.

The bridegroom and his friends came riding their best horses, like young Lochinvar out of the west. The young men looked very picturesque with their best and brightest robes and arrow cases slung over their shoulders, bearing down upon the bride's tent at full gallop. A short distance away they dismounted, tying their ponies to a rope stretched between two poles for the purpose. Bearing gifts, they approached the *yurt* on foot. The bride's eldest brother then appeared in the doorway and demanded what they wanted, to which they replied that they desired to enter.

"Then you must fight for admittance," was the reply. The host thereupon called out reinforcements, and both sides began a scuffle. This was simply another vestige of the old custom of marriage by capture, but the sham fight lasted only a few minutes, and good care was taken that nobody got hurt before the defenders of the tent gave in and invited the assailants to enter.

The bride in her matron's costume.

As the crowd was already great and the air inside suffocating we did not follow them. The ceremony, we were told, consisted of the signing of a simple contract between the families, sealed with much *airak*. How many of the participants managed to mount and ride after all the liquor they consumed was a mystery. As a matter of fact, they rode only a short distance, to some nearby *yurts*, where they spent the afternoon sleeping off the effects of the feasting.

When the hour approached for the bride to leave her home, she was led out of her tent by several women, newly adorned in her matron's ornaments, and at last allowed to show a knowledge of what all these preparations meant. Custom now required her to howl most piteously, and she continued howling while she was placed in state in the wedding *yurt*, where all the women of the village joined in a chorus of lamentations. She was finally taken out again by a young man who, at her father's command, picked her up under his arm like a bundle of faggots and hoisted her on to the saddle of a quiet horse, where she sat motionless, her hands

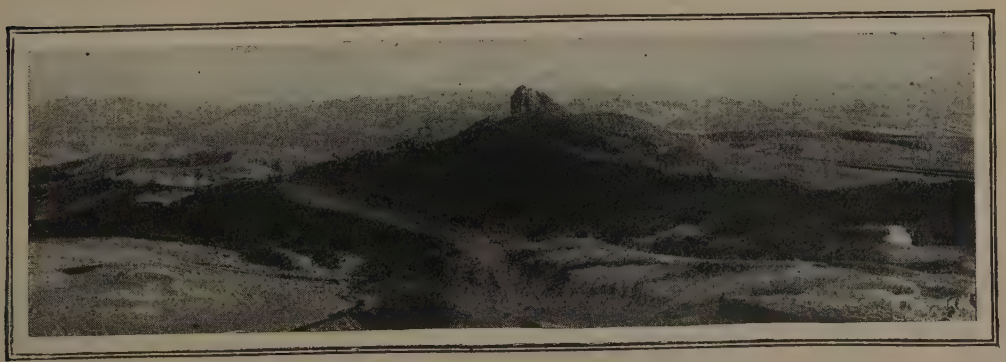
over her face, so limp that she would certainly have rolled off had her attendants not held her on. Then the horse was led away in the direction prescribed by the soothsayers and she disappeared into the darkness of the steppe, still howling dismally.

The tent where the marriage contract was signed.

Early next morning we took leave of our hospitable hosts, most of whom were distinctly the worse for wear, and resumed our journey to Kalgan. The descent to Kalgan is very grand and the views much more extensive going down than coming up the pass, as we had the advantage of looking on the panorama of plain and mountain ranges from the higher ground. All the way to the north we could see as far as the distant snow-capped summits of the Khingan chain, stretching away to distant Kamschatka. To the south we saw the ruins of the Great Wall, wandering away for hundreds of miles to Turkestan. Behind us stretched the vast grassy tableland bathed in an atmosphere so clear that we could distinguish landmarks which we knew to be from one to two hundred miles distant, while before us a series of hills and valleys descended to the fertile plains of China, reaching to a far horizon.

Except the view of the Grand Canyon of Arizona there is perhaps none other in the world so impressive as this, and it has the advantage of greater historical associations. From the point where we paused, stunned by the immensity of the panorama, the Mongols covetously gazed down on the fruitful lands of the Middle Kingdom before their great invasion. Sermons in stones, indeed, we read standing at the head of this pass on the very spot which had once been a great thoroughfare, where Genghis Khan and his followers had once passed. But if the Great Captain were to come to life again, as the prophets promise, he would still find himself at home among his people. His laws are still obeyed, his clothes are still in fashion and—but for the paralyzing influence of the Lama Church—his people would show the same qualities of military prowess which he used with such tremendous effect. Some say that his spirit has already returned and leads his countrymen to a new and more legitimate conquest, the achievement of their own independence from foreign domination.

THE END.



Looking down from the top of the Kalgan Pass.

Short Stories

A WILDFOWLING ADVENTURE.

By ERNEST A. LITTEN.

Illustrated by T. H. ROBINSON.

Owing to the nature of the sport, the wildfowler occasionally finds himself "up against it." Here is the story of a nasty little experience on the Solway Firth.

THERE are probably few forms of sport that put all one's powers of endurance to the test, but wildfowling gets very near to it. The pursuit of wildfowl, more especially ducks and geese, makes it necessary for the sportsman to operate on the loneliest and most dangerous parts of the coast. Sandbanks, mudflats, tidal creeks, and the estuaries of rivers form the main feeding and resting-places of the birds, and here they have to be sought. They have learnt, moreover, that it is safer to feed by night, so that they must be pursued, as a rule, in the rapidly-fading light of a winter's evening, and nightfall finds the fowler far from home with danger all around him. The wilder the weather the tamer the birds, and the greater the chances of making a good "bag." With these few main facts in mind it will be easier for the reader to appreciate the following little adventure which happened to the writer a few years ago.

November, 19—, was by no means ideal, but having a short vacation due to me I elected to spend it wildfowling on the Solway Firth. A long night's journey landed me at my destination in time for breakfast, after which my friend and I started out.

Usually my companion can easily take a party of friends across the river in his boat single-handed, but with a "fresh" in the river and both wind and tide against us, it took our united efforts to cross the few hundred yards of water to our landing-place. Not being in practice I found the exertion very trying and began to wonder whether my oar or my back would break first.

After being swept past the steps several times owing to the rush of the current we eventually effected a landing. Wading and struggling up the steep slippery bank was no joke, as at every step one's top-boots went in half way up the leg, and getting them out again was a work of art.

The grapnel was made fast and the boat allowed to swing with the current. A long walk over the hills brought us to a favourite bay which at certain seasons, when wind and weather were favourable, afforded good sport. Widgeon, mallard, oyster-catchers, redshanks, and other birds were seen and stalked, but with little success, as cover was scarce and the birds wary and well able to look after themselves.

Daylight was all too short, and ere long we retraced our steps over the hill and down into another bay, where we hoped to get a few shots at "flighting" duck about dusk. My companion took his stand at one side of the bay, I took mine at the other. Luck still did not favour me, and although the weather had improved slightly during the day it was now pouring hard. In spite of oilskins and warm clothes I was by this time fairly wet and feeling very cold and uncomfortable. Although a keen wildfowler I must confess that just then the warm fireside appealed to me more than the open bay with a full gale on and the night so black that it was impossible to see a foot ahead. Needless to say the whistle from my companion, which was the prearranged signal for joining him, was most welcome.

I duly started for the head of the bay, but how to find my friend I did not know. Luck, which seemed to have deserted me so far, now did me a good turn, for ere long we actually collided with one another.

X——, I discovered, had managed to secure a couple of mallard, but nevertheless was quite ready for home.

Hailstones of a large size now started to bombard us, and the darkness was so intense that we had literally to "feel" our way, and had I been alone I should have been obliged to remain where I was until daylight, as dangers are numerous on this marsh, which is intersected with deep creeks and holes.

Foot by foot we progressed until, after

several narrow escapes from falls, we eventually reached the bank of the river, which was also the edge of the marsh. Following the bank we found our grapnel rope through one of us tripping over it.

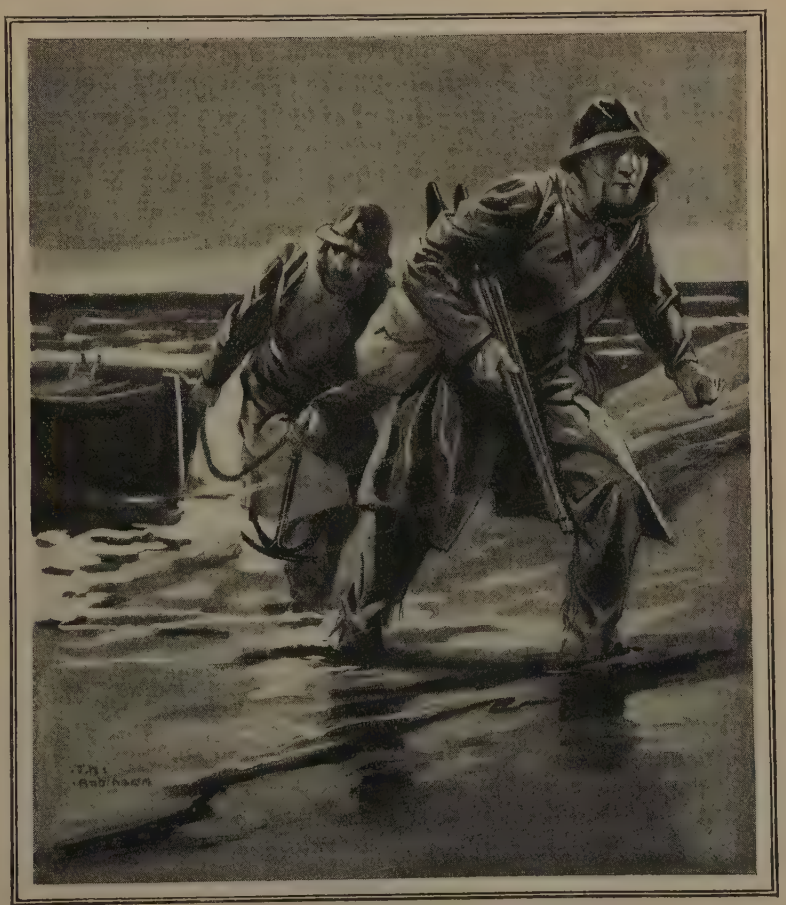
Our troubles were by no means over, however. Putting down our bags and guns, we cautiously clambered down the steep mud banks to the edge of the stream and hauled in the boat. She came unwillingly and heavily, and to our horror we found that she was half full of water. Evidently she had not settled down properly when the tide left her, and before lifting on the flood had half filled. Fortunately the oars were safe, as they had been wedged under the seats, but the " bailer " was gone.

What was to be done ? The steep banks made it impossible to draw her up and empty the water out, and she would not carry us safely in her present condition. It was no use trying to get help from across the river, as our voices would not carry a dozen yards in the gale that was now raging. Nevertheless we must get back somehow, if possible, as otherwise our friends would think we had been drowned.

Having noticed a schooner anchored farther down the river when we crossed in the morning, we decided to try and locate her and, if she was not already afloat, wade out to her and try to borrow a bucket or bailer. Turning our faces seawards, we started down the river, my friend leading. Naturally our progress was slow, although time was precious on account of the rising tide. No light could be seen, and we could only guess at the schooner's location.

Soon the hard mud gave place to softer going, and each step was more difficult as we waded out seawards to where we thought the vessel lay. Getting tired, I unconsciously dropped a step or two behind, and when I called to my companion suddenly discovered that he was out of earshot and I was alone. I tried to hurry forward and catch him up, but the mud seemed like quicksand, and I sank nearly to the tops of my boots at every step. Sideways was no better, for I had apparently struck a soft patch. I was now beginning to get a bit anxious, so I turned back and then tried forward again, only to find myself sinking deeper and deeper at each step. While endeavouring to find a better footing I must have turned round once or twice, for presently I realized that I had completely lost my bearings and had no idea of the proper direction !

Here was a predicament indeed !—alone on a mudbank that was being rapidly covered by the rising tide, a full gale raging, not a glimmer of light anywhere, and no knowledge of which way to go for safety, whilst all around the mud seemed anxious to engulf me ! However, it was no good losing my head, so I made a few more plunges and fortunately struck a harder bed of mud. Then, not knowing a better plan, I stood



" We eventually effected a landing."

still and awaited developments. In the black darkness, with the roar of the gale and the returning tide in my ears, I felt about as cheerful as a man awaiting execution.

Meanwhile, as I learnt later, my friend, thinking that I was close behind him, plodded on steadily, and succeeded in locating the schooner before the tide reached her. Repeated shouts produced no result, which was no wonder considering the weather. Finally he clambered up the anchor chain and made his way to the forecastle, where he nearly frightened out of his wits the single sailor left in charge. After assuring the man that he was not a ghost, X—— made him understand his wants and quickly got the loan of a bucket.

Climbing down to the mud again, he quite thought that he would find me there waiting for him, and when he failed to do so, or to get any reply to his call, he confessed that he had a very bad ten minutes. Carefully retracing his steps, he shouted again and again, and presently I heard him and answered. Which of us was the more thankful it would be difficult to decide.

The worst of our troubles were now over, for we soon found our boat again and bailed her out. Then, collecting our guns and gear, we got aboard and started a strenuous pull for home. The tide was against us again, and we were not as fresh as when we started out in the morning; the huge hailstones driven by the wind were also positively painful. At long last, however, we got across the river. It was impossible to reach the small pier or jetty from which we had started, so we landed in a creek about a quater of a mile higher up the river. Never in my life have I been more thankful to finish up a day's wildfowling!

FISHING FOR CROCODILES.

By CAPTAIN S. JEPSON.

Illustrated by F. E. HILEY.

An officer's amusing account of an experiment in fishing for "crocs" with something special in the way of hook and line.

"FISHING for crocodiles?" I can imagine the reader echoing, "Can it be done?"

Yes; it can. I will tell you all about it, and then, perchance, you will go down to the murky waters of some tropical stream to try and hook some monster twenty-footer. As to landing him—well, that is a different story.

Picture, reader, a whitewashed, broad-verandaed bungalow on the banks of the great Mother Ganges in India. Glistening yellow sand-banks rise here and there from the sacred river; and away from the noise of the cantonment ugly old crocodiles bask in the winter sunshine. Your subaltern friend from the East has probably told you how he has shot them and had their skins turned into smart suit-cases.

This was the scene of the little incident I am about to relate. It was in the hot summer months, when the flood waters raced over the sand-banks, and the crocodiles appeared no more, though they were still somewhere there.

However, we had a brilliant idea, and fished for them from the veranda. Our tackle was certainly original. The line was a double length of field telephone wire; the float, a thick branch of a tree; the hook, a long iron link ending in a formidable three-pointed arrangement resembling a balloonist's grapnel rather than a fishing hook. The bait—well, the bait was produced by the cantonment pariah-dog killer at annas eight per week.

For days and days we fished with never a bite at the bait, until my once enthusiastic orderly, supposed to watch the float from under a tree in the garden, slumbered quietly at his post. So did the young *sahib*, to whose "long chair" on the veranda the double line was tied.

And then something happened!

The float dipped—and dipped again, but the orderly slept on quietly. The *sahib*, therefore, knew nothing about it until the next minute he was jerked rudely out of his "long chair" on to the hard stone floor. That beautiful chair would undoubtedly have been towed down the river by a crocodile had our line not been anchored to a stout tree trunk. As it was, the line tightened and the chair rose into mid-air, while the young *sahib* shouted wildly for his orderly.

The orderly, asked for his opinion, thought we should not be strong enough to land the crocodile alone. Watching the quivering line—now sweeping across the lawn and knocking over flower-pots and other obstructions, now bending the tree trunk to strange angles—I heartily agreed!

"The Company tug-o'-war team!" cried the sepoy suddenly, and sprinted off to the Regimental lines.

The members of the tug-o'-war team

"Next minute he was jerked rudely out of his 'long chair.'"

arrived one by one, and having finally mustered twelve stout fellows, we heaved on the line, which began to come in handsomely.

Then some clever individual thought he would tie the end of the line around his waist, in approved tug-o'-war style. Accordingly he severed it from the tree with an axe. Next moment he was yelling for help, and our prize tug-o'-war team, victors in a hundred contests, found themselves being dragged slowly but surely towards the river.

Puffing and shouting alternately, the leading man steered for another tree. Around this the line was being deftly manœuvred when—*Crack!*

Thereupon, as one man, the whole team sat down violently. The strain relaxed, and we pulled out of Mother Ganges—not a vicious jumping crocodile, but a crumpled iron link and hook.

That is the whole story. It only remains to add a word of advice. If you are anxious to go fishing for crocodiles, first get ready a well-trained elephant or a steam windlass.

ON PATROL.

By "HAWAI JEHAZ."

Illustrated by A. SINDALL.

A quaint little experience related by a flying officer of the Royal Air Force.

WHILE flying on the North-west Frontier of India I had the misfortune to be forced to land, owing to engine trouble, at an isolated fort beyond the Administrative Border. This post was held by what are called Khassadars, or levies, drawn from the local Wazir tribesmen. These men are paid by the Indian Government to "keep the flag flying," and are, of course, entirely undisciplined and often of very doubtful reliability.

As soon as I landed my machine was at once surrounded by about a hundred of these gentry—and a more villainous-looking collection of cut-throats it has never

been my ill-luck to behold. Dressed for the most part in filthy white baggy trousers and embroidered waistcoats, with ragged black or brown *puggris* on their heads from beneath which their oily black hair hung in greasy ringlets, every man carried a rifle and bandolier and most of them a knife or two. Their rifles were of various makes, from old percussion-cap muzzle-loaders and Afridi-made Martinis to good Lee-Enfields, while their knives were mostly of the triangular-bladed silver-mounted type made in the factories in Afghanistan.

After examining my machine I came to the conclusion that it was useless to attempt to return home that evening, so there was nothing for it but to resign myself to a night in the fort. With the assistance of the Khassadars I wheeled the aeroplane round under the shelter of the walls of the fort, and pegged it down securely, first removing the Lewis gun and ammunition drums. Then, attended by the English-speaking *Naib Tahsildar*, the sort of C.O. of the place, a stout-hearted and loyal Hazara from the Abbottabad country, I entered the tiny courtyard of the little post. The massive doors shut behind me with a clang, and I knew that for the night, at any rate, all communication with the outside world was cut off.

In one corner of the fort was a room in which the Political Agent from down-country was wont to stay when on tour,

A typical North-west Frontier fort.

and in this I was accommodated. I discovered that the P.A.—thoughtful fellow! —had laid in a good stock of tinned stuffs, sardines, and what not, also a goodly store of beer, and off these I made a hearty supper. The *Naib Tahsildar* sat with me while I supped. From time to time the armed brigand on guard outside the door would admit sheepish-looking tribesmen who conferred in whispered Pushtu with the N.T. These men, I learnt later, were spies, and the conference always ended with a clinking of silver.

The whole affair had a distinct flavour of Drury Lane melodrama—the ill-lit room, the squatting figures of the Wazirs, and, through the square window, the dark silhouette of a sentry, rifle in hand, leaning over the battlements. Then, in complete accordance with the tradition of melodrama, came "Crack . . . phut!" and a bullet struck the mud wall of the fort.

("Tumult and alarum" off!) From the courtyard below came the roll of a drum, followed at once by the pattering of bare feet. The gallant defenders manning the ramparts!

Then followed a delightful set-to. As far as I could gather every man of the Khassadars blazed off madly in any and every direction, while the enemy amused themselves by discharging their pieces at the unoffending fort walls. I took hold of my Lewis gun with the purpose of joining in the fray, but was restrained by the *Naib Tahsildar*.

"Nay, Sahib, waste not your bullets to-night, when all is dark," he said. "Perchance the enemy may make an attack in force in the morning; then the machine-gun will be really needed."

After about five minutes the firing died away, and all was quiet. Nobody was hurt on either side. It was the evening hymn of hate as sung in the Wazir country—either that or the whole thing was a "put-up job" arranged for my special benefit. Barring the fact that I was not the sole occupant of the blankets which I had been lent, the rest of the night passed in peace and quiet.

Next morning I had breakfast in the *Naib Tahsildar's* room and witnessed rather an amusing sequel to the night's affray. One after the other the Khassadars filed in and produced the empty cartridge cases which they had discharged in their nocturnal shooting match. These were carefully counted and the number entered against their names in a ledger by the *Tahsildar*. The Government, it appears, pays each man the sum of annas eight per round discharged in its defence, and with an eye to business several wily knaves handed in cartridge-cases which had obviously been fired off some weeks before. However, the *Tahsildar* was too clever for them, and after sniffing at the suspicious ones refused to credit them,

despite the injured protestations of the owners!

Breakfast being over, the *Tahsildar* said to me: "Touching the matter of the fort well, Sahib. It is out of order. Doubtless your honour, being a skilled mechanic, will be able to mend it for us."

by half-a-dozen Khassadars to carry down the eight drums of ammunition which I had left in my room. One of the tribesmen, a jolly-faced rogue in a brown *puggri*, kept on pointing to his empty bandolier and saying that I was his friend, and would I let him have "just five rounds for luck!"

"'Nay, Sahib, waste not your bullets to-night,' he said."

Professing my willingness to do what I could, I was taken into the courtyard and shown a ponderous piece of machinery, all cogs and spindles, which drew the string of buckets up from the well. Having with considerable difficulty and the assistance of the Khassadars taken the whole thing to bits, I proceeded to put it together again. When I had finished, it worked rather worse than before, but it was evident that my brigands were duly impressed.

As there was no sign of the enemy of the previous night returning, I had my aeroplane wheeled out on to the landing ground, and sat down to await the arrival of a relief machine from the nearest aerodrome. All around me in a circle sat the Khassadars, and the more I examined them, the more evil-looking did they appear. After a while, wearying of inaction, several of them began to load the magazines of their rifles and click the bolts in a highly suggestive manner. I thereupon got down my Lewis gun and made show of cleaning it, at the same time keeping a drum near to hand just in case one of my friends should discharge his rifle—by a mistake.

About noon another machine came over and we set to work trying to repair mine, but were at length compelled to give it up, the pilot agreeing to fly me away. Accordingly I went back to the fort, accompanied I replied that I was not "an ammunition sort of friend!"

After I had placed the drums in the back seat of the machine, I proceeded to check them over and could only find seven.

"Oh, *Tahsildar-jee*," said I, "somebody has stolen a drum of ammunition. I expect it is that fellow over there with the brown *puggri*."

There followed much heated argument and vehement denials on all sides, during which time I discovered the missing drum hidden away on the floor of the cockpit. When I told the *Tahsildar* that it was all right, my brown-turbaned friend turned to me with a broad grin.

"Ah, ha! Sahib; you thought I was a robber, didn't you?" he chuckled. "You thought I'd stolen your drum of ammunition! But that's just where you're wrong, Sahib. *I didn't have a chance!*"

Obviously a fellow with a sense of humour!

After this we started up the machine and flew back in safety to an aerodrome within the borders of British India. My own machine we left at the fort, whence the engine was removed some months later. The fuselage and planes were found to be past salving, the Khassadars having apparently used them as targets for rifle practice—at annas eight per shot, I suppose!—in the interim!

The MISSING LINKS

by

F. F. Shearwood

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN DE WALTON

A quaint little story from India, showing how a native magician discovered a thief when the police had failed.

IT was one of those depressing days at the beginning of the hot weather in India.

All day long the hot wind had been blowing, and the game of tennis at the Club had been an irritating affair. After an hour of it, the four players had dropped exhausted into chairs in the shade.

Jones, one of the party, only stopped a few minutes, as it was mail night, and he wanted to get back to his bungalow to write his letters. As soon as he entered the compound he saw that something was wrong. All the servants were gathered together in the front veranda quarrelling amongst themselves in loud, angry voices. The *masalchi* was weeping, and the bearer, a big bearded Moslem, was abusing him. "Well then, I shall tell the Sahib," Jones heard him say.

It was no unusual matter for the servants to quarrel, and rather wearily Jones told them to go away. They were beginning to obey, and Jones was about to enter the house, when the bearer, one Fasih ud din, stopped him.

"*Huzoor*," he said, salaaming, "I have some very bad news to report to you." He paused dramatically, and Jones impatiently told him to go on.

"*Huzoor*," he repeated, "when you changed into your tennis clothes, you left your other clothes lying on the bed. About half an hour after you had gone I sent this rascal (pointing to the *masalchi*) into your room to get your shoes for cleaning. When he was there he must have stolen your gold cuff-links, for, when I went to tidy up the room, I found that the links had gone."

"My links gone!" exclaimed Jones. "My word! I have had enough of this. For the last four months there has been systematic stealing going on. Have you got them?" and he turned angrily to the *masalchi*.

"No, *Huzoor*," exclaimed the boy—he was only about fifteen years old—"I swear that I have not. I went into your room as he (pointing to Fasih ud din) told me, and brought out your shoes. I did not touch your clothes," and he broke out weeping afresh.

Jones was now thoroughly angry. Petty stealing had been going on for several months—small things that did not particularly matter, but these links were different. They had been given to him years ago by his mother, and he valued them for sentimental reasons.

Going into his office, he called Fasih ud din and told him to bring all the servants.

When they came—the *khansamah*, the bearer, the *masalchi*, the *bhisti*, the *sais*, the *dhobi*, and the sweeper—he made them stand in a line in front of him.

"Now look here," he said, "I am going to get to the bottom of this," and he proceeded to cross-examine them, one after the other.

But it was quite useless. The *masalchi* stuck to his story. The Sahib was his father and mother. Why should he steal from him?

After half an hour's questioning Jones dismissed them and, after a bath and change, returned to his office and rang up the police station, asking them to send a man to investigate.

Within half an hour a sub-inspector and a constable arrived, and Jones told them the story.

Then began the usual police examination.

The sub-inspector called the servants one by one, wrote down their statements and, after reading out what he had written, made them sign or put their thumb-prints at the bottom of each page.

At the end of the inquiry he came to Jones.

"I would suggest, Sahib," he said, "that you tell all the servants that you are going out for half an hour, and that if, before you return, the links are replaced, you will forgive them, but that if they are not you will cut half the salary of each at the end of this month. If you do it like this none of them will know who has replaced the links."

Jones agreed and the sub-inspector again called all the servants.

"The Sahib is going out for half an hour," he told them. "You will go, one by one, into the room. You will each remain two minutes there, and the thief—for it must be one of you—can put the links under the mattress. If they are not there when the Sahib comes back, then I can tell you that it will be hard for you all! Now each of you go to your own house for five minutes, and then come back, one by one."

The melancholy procession went slowly back to the servants' quarters, and Jones set out for his half-hour's walk. When he returned he found the servants squatting in a line opposite their quarters, whilst the sub-inspector, sitting on a chair in front of them, was dilating on the horrors of what would happen to them all if the thief did not own up. He sprang to his feet as Jones approached and told him that the links had not been returned.

"But we will get them, Sahib," he went on. "If you will let me deal with these men exactly as I like, I promise that you shall have them back within two days."

"All right; do as you like," Jones told him, and the sub-inspector then proceeded to search each man's house.

Everything was turned upside down. None of the servants had their wives with them, so there was no fear of breaking *purdah*. All sorts of strange things came to light as the boxes were opened—old shirts that Jones dimly recognized, but, being a bachelor, was not quite sure of, and a few odd things which he remembered to have thrown away.

The search proved fruitless. No trace of the links was found, and finally Jones and the sub-inspector returned to the bungalow.

"What do you think, Inspector Sahib?" asked Jones.

"Sahib," replied the man, "I think that the *masalchi* has stolen them. With your permission I will take him back to the police station. I can question him better there." He smiled knowingly.

"Very well," replied Jones. "But don't be too hard on the boy."

The *masalchi* was called and, when he heard that he was to be taken to the police station, flung himself weeping at Jones's feet.

"*Huzoor*," he exclaimed, "don't let them take me away! They will beat me! I swear by Allah that I have never taken the links! They will kill me!"

Jones felt sorry for the boy, but felt that he must let the matter take its course. He shrugged his shoulders.

"I am very sorry," he said, "but what can I do? One of you has taken them, and you are the only person who was in the room. Don't beat him," he added, turning to the sub-inspector.

"Beat him?" exclaimed the latter! "No, certainly not! If he tells the truth he has nothing to fear whatever."

"*Sahib-ji*," exclaimed the boy, almost screaming in his fear, "don't let them take me! The bearer was in your room, too!"

"True," replied the sub-inspector, "and we haven't finished with him yet, either. But we are going to try you first. Have we permission to go, *Huzoor?*"

He saluted, and he and the constable went off, leading the sobbing *masalchi* between them.

The next morning the first person whom Jones saw when he went out of the house was the sub-inspector waiting on the veranda wearing a triumphant grin on his face.

"*Huzoor*," he said, in tones of great satisfaction, "the *masalchi* has confessed that he stole the links."

"Oh," replied Jones. He felt disappointed because the *masalchi* was a bright, clean kind of boy, and he had always liked him. "Have you got the links?"

"Not yet, *Huzoor*. He won't confess where he has put them. But he will before the day is up."

"I will come round to the station and see him," said Jones thoughtfully.

The sub-inspector did not reply for a moment. Then he said:—

"It would be better for you not to come yet, *Huzoor*. The boy will tell us before the evening, but if you come he may only become more stubborn."

Jones did not reply, and the sub-inspector went away. That afternoon, after his tiffin, instead of the usual game of tennis, he walked round to the police station. Inside the porch stood the sub-inspector, and Jones noticed that his face fell when he caught sight of him.

"He has not yet confessed," the man said.

"May I see him?" asked Jones.

"If you wish to," replied the other reluctantly, and Jones followed him round to the back of the station where, in a kind of cage, together with three other male prisoners, he saw his *masalchi* sitting on the ground,

dirty and miserable, with the tear-marks still on his cheeks.

Directly the boy saw Jones he sprang to his feet, and began to weep anew, and Jones's heart smote him. He hardened his heart, however, and speaking sternly, said: "I hear that you have confessed that you stole the links. It was too bad of you. I have always been kind to you. Why don't you confess the whole thing, and tell me where you have hidden them?"

The boy's whole body was shaking with sobs. With difficulty he restrained himself and, gripping the bars in front of him with both hands, exclaimed, "I swear that I have not taken them, *Sahib-ji*."

"But you confessed that you had," returned Jones. "Didn't he tell you that he had stolen them?" he added, turning to the sub-inspector.

"He did, *Huzoor*."

"Oh, Sahib," exclaimed the boy. "I had to confess something! They made me. That man," pointing through the bars to the sub-inspector, "took me away to another room by myself, and started twisting my arm. He almost broke it, *Sahib-ji*. Look, it is still swollen. I thought it would break. He told me that he would twist the bones right round until I confessed, so I had to. But, oh, Sahib, believe me. I have eaten your salt. I have never stolen from you. I swear it! Oh, Sahib, take me away from here. That man will kill me. Indeed, he will!"

He became quite inarticulate in his grief and terror. Jones turned angrily to the sub-inspector.

"Have you been torturing him?" he demanded.

The man indignantly denied it.

"How do you account for his swollen arm, then?"

"It must have been like that before," replied the sub-inspector sulkily.

Jones thought rapidly for a moment. As far as he knew there had been nothing wrong with the boy's arm yesterday. He would almost certainly have come to him for some embrocation if there had been, and yet, undoubtedly, it was swollen and painful now.

"Very well, then," he said at last. "I am going to give you another chance. Only for Heaven's sake, do try to be honest!"

He turned to the sub-inspector. "I withdraw the case," he said. "Let him out."

"Very good, *Huzoor*," replied the man. "Only," he added, half under his breath, "you can't expect the police to find your thieves if you won't help us."

"Won't help you!" exclaimed Jones, now thoroughly angry. "I certainly won't help you in brutality! No wonder the people are terrified of you! It's lucky for you that I have got no proof, or I would take the whole matter to the Superintendent of Police. Let the boy out at once!"

He went with the sub-inspector to the office, and there, having signed the necessary papers to the effect that he had withdrawn the case, stalked back to his bungalow, followed by the still weeping *masalchi*.

He had all the servants into his office, and there told them that if any further case of stealing occurred he would dismiss the whole lot of them and go and live at the Club.

And there, he thought, the whole entirely unsatisfactory matter ended.

That night, after dinner, Jones went round to the Club, and, after a game of billiards, told the story to his opponent, the Chaplain of the Station.

"What am I to do, Padre?" he asked. "It is horrible living in an atmosphere of suspicion. One of my servants is a thief. It *must* be one of them, and yet I don't want to sack the whole lot. They are a good enough crowd as servants go. What am I to do?"

The padre thought for a minute.

"I'll tell you what I will do," he said. "To-morrow, if you like, I will send round an Indian thief-catcher. I won't come myself, as his methods are certainly not Christian, and your servants might wonder at my being there. But I have seen this man work before, and if anyone can catch your thief, he will."

The thief-catcher duly arrived the following evening, bringing with him a letter of introduction from the padre.

He was certainly an awe-inspiring object. An old Mussulman, his beard dyed scarlet in honour of the Prophet, and wearing the green turban of a *hajji*, and the long robes of a *mullah*, his figure tall and stately, he at once struck Jones as a man of exceptionally strong personality.

The newcomer followed the white man into the office and there listened quietly to all that Jones was able to tell him about the theft.

"Sahib," he said gravely, when the recital was finished, "if you will let me have a spare unfurnished room—a bathroom will do—and you do not interfere at all, by to-night or to-morrow I shall have discovered the thief."

"You can certainly have a room," replied Jones, "but won't you tell me what you intend to do?"

"No, Sahib, I cannot do that, but you can watch if you like from outside. Will you show me the room now—one, if possible, visible from the servants' quarters?"

Jones took him round to a small bathroom at the back of the house, and then, calling his servants, made them move all the furniture out of it.

It was a small room, about six or seven

feet square, with a stone floor, bare brick walls, and two doors, one opening into a bedroom and the other into the compound.

While the room was being prepared by the wondering servants, the *mullah* stood outside, gravely watching them. The place being ready, he lifted the bag he had brought with him, waving aside the offer of assistance, and placed it on the floor.

"Tell them," he said to Jones, "why I have come here."

Jones did so and noticed the looks of incredulity on the men's faces.

"Allah grant that he may find the rascal!" muttered the bearer piously.

The *mullah* then closed the door leading into the bedroom, leaving the outer one open, and, in full view of the servants, who had gathered in a group some distance off, squatted on the floor. Opening his bag he took out a stand on which he reverently placed a copy of the *Quran Sharif*. For a few minutes he intoned from it in sonorous Arabic; then lifting his voice so that all could hear distinctly, he cried: "O Jinns, come to my aid! By the great seal of King Suliman, the Son of Daud (on whom be peace!) I invoke thee! Come to my aid, O Jinns, that the ill-begotten thief, the son of generations of thieves, may confess his error!"

There was something uncanny about it

"'Oh, Sahib,' exclaimed the boy. 'I had to confess something!'"

all, and Jones, looking in the direction of the servants, saw them watching, their eyes distended with horror.

"Allah!" gasped one, "he is working *jadu* (magic)."

Again and again, going on for over an hour, the *mullah* repeated the same formula, and then, with a suddenness that made the watchers jump, there was a flash of light at his feet, a loud report, and dense clouds of smoke rose from the floor.

There was an exclamation of dismay from the watchers, and even Jones, although he told himself that it must be some trick—probably some kind of firework—felt his scalp tingling.

"The Jinns have come!" he heard the trembling *Khansamah* gasp. "O Sahib!' the man added, "send this magician away, or we shall all perish. Our wives and our children—all will be consumed by the Jinns."

Jones motioned to him to be silent, and to watch what was happening in the bathroom.

Clouds of smoke continued to roll out from the door, but there was no sound from within.

Then, suddenly, there came another explosion, so sudden and abrupt that it brought an exclamation from Jones, and caused the *bhisti* to jump so violently that his turban fell from his head.

Again, for a few minutes, there was silence; then, through the smoke came the sound of the *mullah* gasping for breath. Raising his voice, he shouted: "O Thou! Risen from the depths of Hades, who art Thou?"

The reply, meaningless to Jones and the servants, sounded like the rumble of low thunder.

Then again came the *mullah's* voice: "Bahaqq-i-Shatkīsi, if it be truly Thou, I conjure Thee by the Great Seal of King Suliman (on whom be peace!) that Thou, through Thy magic, show which is the thief!"

Again came the rumbling reply, followed by a long silence. Gradually the smoke cleared away, and then Jones, approaching the door—none of the servants would go any nearer—saw, through the dimming clouds, the *mullah* lying prostrate on the floor.

He beckoned to the servants, and unwillingly enough they came a little nearer.

As they watched, the *mullah* seemed to revive, and, sitting up on the floor, lit a little lamp, for the daylight was now fading fast.

He called them inside, and Jones pushed the frightened men through the door into the room.

It was indeed a gruesome sight which met their eyes.

On the floor squatted the *mullah*, his face streaked with some kind of green paint. Around him were scattered ashes and cinders, and on each side was a human skull fashioned into a kind of cup, while in front of him was a mud figure, some two feet high, representing a jinn (spirit). The room was still full of the fumes of the smoke and, by the dim, flickering light of the little lamp, Jones saw that sprinkled over the skulls and ashes, and over the clothes of the *mullah*, was what looked like blood.

The *mullah* waved the watchers to stand in a line by the wall, and then, in a gruff, unnatural voice, and apparently still in some kind of trance, he began to speak.

"O mortals, ye do well to tremble," he said, "for in this frail human body, I, the mighty jinn Shatkīsi, have taken up my abode. Amongst you is a thief. He is known to me. I call upon him to stand forth before a mighty evil overtakes him. Stand forth—wretch!"

No one replied, and Jones, looking round the line of terrified servants, saw the perspiration rolling down their faces.

"So be it, then," continued the *mullah*. "If you will not confess, then by the power of my magic you shall stand condemned. Look ye there," and he waved a hand dramatically towards the mud figure standing in the middle of the room. Jones turned his eyes towards it and saw that there were a number of pieces of wood, about the diameter of pencils, sticking out from it.

"In my image," continued the magician, "there are sticking seven pieces of magic wood. All are of an equal size. See!" He withdrew them and, holding them together, showed that they were all of the same length.

"On each is a number. Do you take Number One," and he handed one piece to the *khansamah*, who took it tremblingly. "Number Two for you," and he handed another to the bearer. "Three for you," to the *masalchi*, and so on till all the seven had been distributed, one to each.

"Take them away with you to your houses," he went on. "Go each of you into his own house, speaking to none on the way, and, in ten minutes come back. *The stick of him who is the thief will have grown longer than any of the others.* Go!"

The men filed out of the room and silently went to their houses, whilst Jones was left alone with the *mullah*.

"Sahib," whispered the latter, looking up with a smile, "the plot thickens! The men are thoroughly frightened."

"Yes, indeed they are," replied Jones. "But what next? The wood cannot really grow."

"No," replied the *mullah*, "but mark my words. The thief will be so frightened, that fearing his stick may have grown longer, *he will cut a piece off it. The thief will be, not the owner of the longest stick, but of the shortest!* Do you collect the sticks, and, without saying anything, even although you may notice that one is shorter, hand

"'So be it, then,' continued the mullah. 'By the power of my magic you shall stand condemned.'"

them all back to me. Hush! here they come."

Whilst he had been speaking he had rapidly taken seven small glasses out of his bag. Six of these he filled with water from the tap, but the seventh with a colourless liquid from a bottle which he also produced from his bag. Beside them he placed an ordinary chicken's egg, on the shell of which Jones saw that something was written. He then resumed his pretended trance, and the men, each suspiciously and furtively watching the others, filed back into the room.

Jones, full of excitement, collected the sticks, and at once felt that one of them—No. 2, belonging to the bearer—was a good inch shorter than the others! He said nothing but silently handed them to the *mullah*. The latter rapidly examined them, and a smile of triumph lit up his face.

"Ah, you thief!" he exclaimed. "Your stick has grown an inch! Stand forth and confess your shame!"

He looked round at the group, but again there was no reply.

"What! Do you still think to hide your crime?" he cried. "Do you still doubt my magic? See here," and he held up the egg. "This is a magic egg. Hear what is written on it," and he read out, "Ya Buddhu! Grant that the stomach of him who has stolen may swell under the influence of this charm."

"Sahib," he continued, turning to Jones, "please take this egg outside and bury it in the earth."

Jones took it and did as the *mullah* had asked, dropping it down an old snake's hole near the bathroom door, and covering it with loose earth.

He returned to find the *mullah* still squatting, muttering to himself before the servants. "Woe, woe to the thief! Now, see my magic. Do each of you drink a glass of this water. This for you," and he handed one of the glasses of water to the *khansamah*. "This for you," as he gave the glass which Jones knew had been filled from the bottle, to the bearer, and which seemed to have no taste or smell. "For you, for you," until each of the seven held one in his hand.

"Now drink."

They obeyed, the glasses rattling against their teeth.

"Put the glasses down and sit on the floor."

Once more they obeyed and squatted on the ground in front of him.

For a moment there was silence in the room, and then the *mullah* began to sway to and fro, first muttering to himself, and then calling, louder and louder, the invocation which he had used earlier in the evening.

"Amwakilu," he shrieked. "O Eternal Ones," he chanted, "grant that as this egg has been buried in the earth, so may my magic be sown in the body of the thief! Grant, O Eternal Ones, that unless he returns the stolen goods within an hour, the curse may swell in him!"

"Go now," he said at last, "to your houses. Within an hour my charm will work, and then, unless the thief at once returns the links, neither my magic, nor anything else can save him. Go!"

The servants, like chaff before an angry wind, rushed out of the room, and Jones heard their footsteps retreating towards their quarters.

"Now, *Sahib-ji*," said the *mullah*, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, "we can but wait," and he started to pack his apparatus into his bag.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "My magic works quicker than I had thought. Listen, Sahib!"

Sure enough, from the servants' quarters there came the sound of a loud groan. Almost immediately they heard someone running rapidly towards the bathroom. It was the *masalchi*.

"*Sahib-ji*," he gasped, his eyes ablaze with excitement, "the bearer is groaning because of a pain in his stomach. *He* must have taken the links! Do you doubt me now, Sahib?"

"No, my boy, of course not. Great Scott! What's that?" for a sudden apparition had appeared before the bathroom door. It was the bearer, his turban fallen from his head, his long coat torn open, clutching his stomach and writhing in pain. For a moment he stood moaning to himself; then, with a cry of, "I die, I die!" he flung the missing cuff-links at Jones's feet, and rushed away.

Jones stooped down and picked them up.

"You are wonderful," he exclaimed, grasping the *mullah's* hand. "I can never thank you enough."

"It is your kindness," replied the old man.

"That man won't die though, will he!" Jones asked, rather anxiously.

"Die? No, *Sahib*. He will be quite all right after half an hour. Where has he gone?"

But that was a question that even the "magic" of the *mullah* was unable to answer, for the bearer had disappeared. They heard his groans growing fainter and fainter in the distance, and although Jones sent out several of the other servants to look they could find no trace of him. He never came back for his belongings, never claimed his last month's salary, and Jones never saw him again.

The Author in cow-puncher costume.

ROUND THE WORLD WITH A LASSO

by

Captain George Ash

The Author of this absorbing article, who is now giving lassoing and shooting displays to the British Army, was born in Canada, and earned his rank with the famous Texas Rangers, hunting down bandits and cattle-thieves. Since then he has toured the world giving exhibitions of his skill, and has latterly been employed by the War Office in initiating troops into the uses of the lasso. Few living men have met with such remarkable and varied experiences as Captain Ash.

IT was in the spring of 1919 that I was first asked by the military authorities to give cowboy exhibitions to the native troops in India. Having nothing better to do, I accepted the commission, and since then I have been engaged off and on by the War Office in the combined *rôle* of instructor and entertainer to the Imperial forces.

How the War Office came to engage me is an interesting story.

On the morning of Saturday, April 12th, I was walking along Strand Road, one of Calcutta's principal thoroughfares, when I saw a huge crowd of natives shouting, yelling, and brandishing fire-arms and sticks. As I got nearer, I saw they had surrounded a wagon coming from the Mint—loaded, as I afterwards discovered, with silver. The driver and escort were in a bad way, for as there seemed to be no police or soldiers about they were at the mercy of the mob.

I had my revolver with me, and pushing my way through the excited crowd, I jumped on to the wagon, getting a good many hard blows from cudgels as I did so. Once on the vehicle I drew my revolver and levelled it at the crowd. They made a rush in my direction, but pulled up when they saw I meant business. Then I made my way to the back of the wagon, telling the driver to get back to the Mint as quickly as he could.

As soon as the mob saw they were going to be outwitted they rushed forward once more. This time I fired, for I recognized that the slightest sign of weakness on my part would mean that I should be torn to pieces.

Three fellows went down with the three shots I fired and this scared the rioters somewhat, though they still followed the wagon shouting threats. They made several more rushes, and at last I was forced to fire again. The crowd then pulled up and I shouted to the driver to go as fast as he could. A few minutes more and the wagon was safely back in the Mint.

When I discovered that I had saved a cargo of silver I certainly expected the Government would acknowledge my services in some practical way, but all I received was a bare "Thank you!"

The military authorities, however, congratulated me most enthusiastically, and suggested that I should stay in India and give lassoing, shooting, and riding exhibitions to the troops.

I had only just come from Japan, China, and the Malay States, where I had been giving cowboy shows, and I suppose my reputation with the rope and revolver had preceded me. Anyhow, I accepted the offer, and have been virtually in Government employ ever since.

What is more, I have not only been called upon to give displays, but to actually instruct troops in the use of the lasso. Thousands of our black soldiers can now handle this Western weapon with dexterity, and I know they will find it useful.

I toured India fairly thoroughly, going right across from Calcutta to Bombay, visiting some of the native states, where the ruling princes received me very graciously, and so on to Peshawar and the Khyber Pass.

I had many quaint experiences before I reached the Afghan border, where a bullet nearly put "paid" to my account. Everywhere I was assisted and encouraged by the British officers, whom I found to be fine fellows and good sportsmen.

MY PIG-HUNT.

On one occasion I was invited by several officers of the Indian Lancers to accompany them on a wild-pig hunt. I told them I had never hunted pigs before with a lance, but was willing to try my luck. They impressed upon me that it was an ideal sport, but by the rules of the game the quarry could only be killed with the lance. We duly started off, but there was no sign of pig or any other quarry.

I said I would scout round on my own and see if I could scare anything up, to which the officers agreed. Inwardly I was hoping to run across a pig which would enable me to get the knack of using the lance, a weapon I certainly was not accustomed to.

I had not travelled far when I espied a pig. As soon as he saw me down went his head and he charged in my direction. I quickly recognized that a wild pig is no mean foe. Lowering my lance I also charged; but that pig knew something. He ran right under the forelegs of my horse and the next moment my mount was thrown. In trying to save myself I lost my lance, and before I could rise from the ground the pig had turned and was again charging me. Instantly I drew my revolver and shot the animal clean through the eyes.

The report of the pistol quickly brought my friends on the scene. On seeing me covered with dust and dirt, the broken lance, and the dead pig, one of them exclaimed:—

"Why, Captain, I thought you were a sport!"

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"Well, it's against the rules to shoot a pig; you must stick him."

"That's all right," I answered. "It was the pig or me, and I was not going to take any chances."

A MYSTERY OF THE NIGHT.

Whilst travelling up country I put up one night at a Duk bungalow, a hut run by the Government for the use of officers and European travellers. I was the only person staying there. As I was lying in my bunk the door of my room suddenly opened. I thought it rather strange, but simply got up and closed it. A few minutes later the door again opened, and I then began to have suspicions that all was not right. Closing the door once more I crept into bed, felt for my revolver, which I always kept under my pillow, and waited. There was no wind blowing and I suspected that the door was being opened by some human agency.

Presently it opened again and instantly I fired four shots through it with my revolver. Jumping out of bed I ran to the door and flung it wide open, but could discern nothing. Hastily pulling on some clothes I called the caretaker and, receiving no answer, went round to the cook-house at the back of the bungalow. Here I found the caretaker shaking with fear. He had heard my revolver shots, he said, and guessed that something had happened. I questioned him as to who was prowling around at such a time of the night, but received no satisfactory reply. Examination revealed no signs of foot-

"The next moment my mount was thrown."

prints, so I went back to bed again. Nothing happened during the remainder of the night and in the morning I took my departure.

A few days later a British officer who stayed at the bungalow was found murdered in his bed. The caretaker, who made the discovery, at once notified the nearest military camp, where I happened to be staying. We hastened to the bungalow, where we found the officer, Lieut. Smith, lying on the bed covered with blood, his pistol grasped firmly in his hand. Two shots had been fired from the weapon. We discovered a thick trail of blood, so it was obvious that Lieut. Smith had wounded his assassin, whoever he might be. A search

was at once instituted and the villain—a prowling thief—was finally run to earth, found guilty, and hanged.

The ruling princes received me most kindly, and His Highness the Nizam of Secunderabad presented me with a beautiful black mare, one of the finest horses I have ever ridden. The British officers at the military posts in the Khyber Pass gave me a hearty welcome and arranged quite an elaborate programme. The country at that time was by no means settled, and sniping was the rule beyond the border. I was touring round with some officers one morning when we were unexpectedly greeted by a volley of shots. We had been fired upon by some unseen foe from behind some rocks on the other side of a chasm. We took cover and returned the fire, while an orderly was dispatched for assistance.

Before we reached shelter one of our party fell mortally wounded, and a moment later I was hit myself. I remembered nothing more till some days later. I had been shot in the mouth, the bullet slightly splintering the lower part of my jaw and displacing one of my teeth.

When I was convalescent I begged permission to go after the snipers, but as this would have meant crossing the Afghan border, which was forbidden ground, I had to give up the idea. I had chased outlaws in China, the Malay States, the West Indies, and in other countries, and nothing would have pleased me better than to have hunted down the tribesmen who so nearly "got" me.

I found the natives in the East very much interested in cowboy shows, and I gave several performances in decidedly strange places and under novel conditions. In Shanghai I worked in conjunction with the American Red Cross. They placed a couple of young Chinese who could speak English at my disposal, and we travelled many miles into the interior of China giving displays.

Chinese cities are very congested, so the exhibitions were invariably given on waste ground near the city walls. We would first erect a temporary fence, high enough to prevent people looking over it, place a ticket-box at the entrance, placard the fencing with flaming posters, and then await the audience. I had only to stand at the entrance in full cowboy-rig and whirl my lasso over my head to attract a crowd, but what we wanted to do was to get them to pay their money and come inside.

Captain Ash in Palestine.

CHINESE AUDIENCES.

Your Chinaman, however, is a very wily customer and does not believe in paying if by hook or by crook he can see a show for nothing. They would wait for the performance to begin and then climb the fence and view the spectacle from the top. They also cut peep-holes in the palisade, and on more than one occasion pulled it down and literally broke through in a mob.

Little notice was taken of the men I stationed round our enclosure to stop these tricks, and finally I had to take the law into my own hands. When I heard anyone tampering with the fence I would quietly crawl up and drop my lasso over him. Then I would truss him up, carry him to the entrance, and leave him there as a warning to others as to what they might expect if they attempted similar tactics.

The Chinese regarded the lasso with some awe. They looked upon the rope as bewitched, and every time I used it those sitting nearest to me would edge back and look anxiously towards the exit.

On one occasion, I remember, we had a distinguished visitor in the person of the governor of the province. During the exhibition I offered, through my interpreter, to demonstrate how I could tie a man up with the lasso if someone would step forward. No one appeared anxious to volunteer, so my assistant spoke to the governor. He evidently called upon someone, for a man near him stood up, looked at me, then at the rope, and bolted for the door as if he had been shot. Undismayed, the governor called upon a second man, but he also fled, as did two others. I could see the audience were getting frightened, so I went on with the programme.

While on this tour in China I was called upon to do some bandit-hunting. I was approached by the Shanghai police, who informed me

Explaining the use of the lasso to Indian troops.

they were having a lot of trouble with a couple of outlaws who had been robbing missionaries near Hangchow. Two Chinese detectives, who spoke very fair English and knew the history of the robbers, were placed at my disposal and we hastened to Hangchow. Here the detectives learnt that the outlaws were hiding in a small town not far away. We went there, and after making inquiries discovered the robbers' rendezvous, a dirty little shanty in a very narrow alley.

To my surprise the detectives were afraid to arrest them; they declared that if we attempted to do so we should all be murdered, as the outlaws had many friends. But I was in no mood for delay. For over a week I had been living in dirty, stuffy, and insanitary inns, eating only Chinese food, and I was sick of the whole business.

"Look here," I said, "we'll rush them right away, so come along and get busy." We placed a couple of rickshaws at the end of the alley, and then ventured down to the place where the robbers were. The detectives knew them, and, quietly drawing me on one side, pointed to a couple of men sitting down, Indian fashion, eating rice with chopsticks.

"Quick!" I shouted, and I sprang forward, revolver in hand.

I gave the nearest fellow a tap on the head with the butt end of the weapon, silencing him for a time, and then covered the other while one of the detectives slipped a pair of handcuffs over his wrist. Meanwhile my other assistant had handcuffed the first man. We then gagged them, so they could not shout for help, and hurried them off to the waiting rickshaws. A few minutes later we were on our way to the station. Here we placed them in a private compartment and took them to Shanghai.

In the Malay States, at the request of some of the large rubber planters, I gave entertainments to their workers. These shows were invariably given at night, when some five hundred plantation hands, with their wives and half-naked children, squatted round in a semi-circle and followed all my actions intently.

The illumination was supplied by improvised flares. Behind me would be a semi-circle of twenty men, who held aloft long poles on the top of which were coconuts. These latter were stuffed with waste saturated with oil, which, when lit, gave me all the light I required.

MURDER!

At Taiping I got quite friendly with the police inspector, and, as a result, had the pleasure of helping his men in a bandit hunt. I was at the station one morning, chatting with the officers, when we heard a sudden commotion. On going out to see what was the matter we found a couple of Sikh policemen carrying a stretcher on which lay the dead body of a white man, the "boss" of a small tin mine. The poor fellow had been foully done to death; his head was battered in and he was covered with blood.

Matthews, the inspector, at once instituted inquiries, and it transpired that the murder was the work of Lung Fung, a desperate Chinaman who had been seen in the neighbourhood of the mine and had threatened

to do away with its white "boss." Lung Fung and another outlaw were now in hiding in the mountains near the mine, and had given it out that the white policeman would not dare to take them.

Matthews determined to go after the murderers and asked me if I would come with him, to which I readily agreed. We took two Sikh policemen with us, both of whom knew Lung Fung by sight, and when we reached the mine we started scouting. At last we came upon some tracks, but they were difficult to follow as the ground was hard and the outlaws wore no boots. We kept on, however, and in due course struck their camp, a disused mining shanty in the hills. Creeping cautiously up, we took shelter behind the building, crawled to the corner, and peeped round. A few yards away I saw our Chinamen, one of whom was an oldish man with a brutal-looking face—Lung Fung himself. I itched to cover him with my gun, but Matthews told me that the others were dangerous characters, wanted by the police, and he was anxious to take them all alive.

The Chinamen were seated on the ground, talking as if quite at their ease, which was encouraging. We agreed to rush them, Matthews and one Sikh bursting upon them from one side of the building, and the second Sikh and I from the other side. We were to fire our revolvers once in the air as we did so and call upon them to surrender. If they showed fight we were to fire without hesitation.

Our sudden appearance and the firing proved a dramatic surprise. The Chinamen scrambled to their feet in alarm, and I noticed Lung Fung's hand go down to his gun. Instantly my revolver barked and he fell over. The others drew their knives, but we were now right upon them. One raised his knife and was about to plunge it into one of the Sikhs, but Matthews was too quick, and shot him dead. The other two surrendered quietly.

One of the Sikhs was then dispatched for a bullock cart, and when the vehicle arrived we placed the dead Chinaman in it and also Lung Fung, whom we discovered was badly wounded. He died two days afterwards. The two remaining prisoners received five and ten years' imprisonment respectively for robberies.

EXPERIENCES IN PALESTINE.

When I was in Egypt I was called upon to take some troops up to Jerusalem, and on my arrival there Major Saunders, head of the Palestine Police Force, approached me, saying they were short of European officers. Would I accept a temporary commission in the force? They were having a lot of trouble with the Bedouins, he told me, and were in need of someone used to scouting in wild places and capable of handling rebels. I therefore agreed to stay, and remained in the force a year, meeting with some exciting experiences.

Shortly afterwards I was selected to escort Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner, and his staff, to the Mosque of Neby Mousa, a shrine that marks the alleged burial-place of Moses, in the desert, not far from Jericho. It was the annual festival, when thousands of Moslems gather at the shrine and spend their time in religious exercises, feasting, and making merry. It was suggested that a typical cowboy show might impress these sons of the desert.

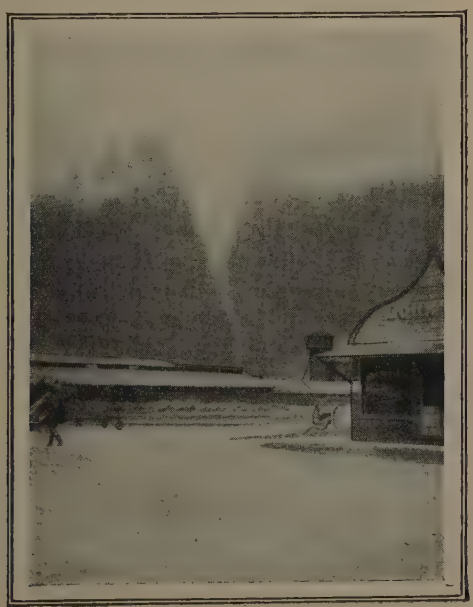
After the pilgrims had shown us what they could do in the way of dancing, sword-play, and horse-racing, I was called upon to take the field. The Arabs had never seen a cowboy before, and they were surprised at my shooting, but still more astonished at the manner in which I used the lasso. They could not understand how I could stop and

Captain Ash lassoing a galloping Bedouin in the presence of the High Commissioner, Sir H. Samuel.

The Author and some of his military police at Jerusalem.

hold a semi-wild horse by means of a rope, and also catch a running man. They crowded round me, felt the rope, and then challenged me to take up a standing position and stop them as they rode past. They only laughed at the jerks of the rope and the tumbles that ensued. I am sorry to say that one determined old sheikh broke his arm in a fall from his horse. I stopped him right enough, but he refused to give in, so he had to come off, but he took it all in good part. The impression my exhibition created among these fierce sons of the desert greatly pleased my superior officers.

Next month Captain Ash will describe his remarkable adventures in Mexico, and his experiences while bandit-hunting in the West Indies.



A KANSAS CYCLONE.

The State of Kansas has long been noted for the terrific cyclones, or circular storms, which periodically sweep across the country, leaving death and devastation in their wake. Here is a very striking photograph of a cyclone approaching the town of Ellis, Kansas, the funnel-like formation of the vortex of the disturbance being clearly marked. This particular cyclone did a great deal of damage in the neighbourhood of Ellis.

The STRANGEST MUTINY ON RECORD

by Rodney Thane

ILLUSTRATED BY W.G.WHITAKER

Mutiny on the high seas has an ugly sound, and is usually a pretty ugly business, often accompanied by bloodshed. Here, however, is the story of something quite unique in the way of mutinies—a story that is still told with much laughter in whaling circles. "The narrative is quite true," writes the Author. "I have culled the details from the official records at New Bedford, Mass., U.S.A."

MUTINY on the high seas is by no means a thing of the past, as some landsmen are apt to assume. As a matter of fact, what is probably the most remarkable mutiny ever recorded took place as recently as 1910. The story is so extraordinary that I have put it together in full detail, from the records still available at New Bedford, and here present it to the readers of THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE.

Among the smaller whaling vessels that still plied their trade in the Atlantic at that date was the schooner *Pedro Varela*, one of the fleet of Portuguese vessels that claimed New Bedford, Massachusetts, as their home port and confined their operations to the temperate and tropical Atlantic and the Caribbean.

One pleasant summer's day in 1910 the *Pedro Varela* set sail from New Bedford bound on a cruise after sperm whales. A little schooner was the *Varela*, a tiny ship compared to the huge square-riggers that, in years gone by, scoured the seven seas in their world-wide search for whales. With the price of sperm oil dropping from nearly a dollar to a few cents a gallon, however, the big ships and barques had been withdrawn one by one, for owners could not make expenses.

But whales there were in plenty, and the thrifty Cape Verde Portuguese could make good profits where Yankees could not, and in their little schooners they still searched the ocean for whales and brought goodly cargoes of oil and spermaceti into port. They certainly confined their operations to waters comparatively near home—the temperate and tropical Atlantic—and were gone only a few months, but many of the old-time whaling customs and ways still survived.

The *Varela*, though Portuguese-owned—despite the fact that she was under the American flag—and Portuguese-officered, nevertheless carried an "all American" crew, though it is doubtful if one of the men was American-born. In whaling parlance, however, an "American" crew signifies a choice assortment of tramps, ex-convicts, criminals, fugitives from justice, and human derelicts, with a leavening of country lads, mill-hands, and the ne'er-do-wells of good families.

There were, of course, a few sailors—just enough experienced men to handle the little vessel. Apart from the swarthy skipper and his two mates there were the cooper, a carpenter, two boatsteerers, the steward, and three seamen.

In tow of a fussy tug the *Varela* was pulled from the dock into the stream, the wind being light, the tow-boat swung the schooner round, pointed her stubby nose towards the harbour entrance, and snorted off towards the sea.

As the few real seamen hoisted sail the mate paced the after-deck and glanced contemptuously at the unkempt crew forward. Although a Portuguese he was, like the skipper, American-born, and spoke English with no trace of accent.

"Worst crowd I've seen in a long spell," he observed to the captain. "I shall love to knock a bit of seamanship into their skulls."

The skipper chuckled. "You have my leave, Manuel," he replied; "only don't go too far. Times ain't what they used to be,

and we don't want to stir up a hornets' nest among the Sailors' Aid Societies and the rest of the folks that mollycoddle these wharf-rats nowadays."

And so, when the low shores of Martha's Vineyard were a cloud on the horizon and Gay Head light had sunk from sight, the mate proceeded to "break in" the "greenies" who had been so unfortunate as to ship as "seamen" on the *Pedro Varela*.

The schooner was under easy sail, the breeze light, and she was on an almost even keel, curtsying gently to the long ocean swell. Standing at the break of the deck, the second mate bawled at the seasick men huddled forward, and with a curse ordered them into the rigging. Wild-eyed, hardly knowing if they had heard aright, the men stared at the burly mate. With a still more expressive oath, he seized a rope's-end in one hand and a belaying-pin in the other and strode forward, with the chief mate by his side.

For an instant the men hesitated, glancing up at the soaring mastheads and utterly terrified at the mere thought of climbing the ratlines to those dizzy heights. But the grim-faced officers were even more awe-inspiring than the rigging, and before the mates were within striking distance, the cowed men were fleeing to the shrouds, glad of any refuge from the swishing rope's-end, the threatening belaying-pin.

Holding for their lives to the rigging, the fellows strove to crawl up, but as they glanced back at the heaving sea beneath, their nerves failed and, like limpets on a rock, they flattened themselves against the shrouds and clung there desperately. With a bound, the mates were below them, and with a yell of pain and terror the nearest men clawed frantically out of reach as the rope and belaying-pin whacked upon legs and bodies.

Needs must when the devil drives, and the two mates of the *Varela* were as near devils as the luckless crew wished to see, and slowly, painfully, with white faces and shaking limbs, they crawled up the shrouds.

An hour of this and the men, faint, deathly sick, and covered with bruises, were ordered back to deck, and the schooner was brought into the wind and hove-to. Then the big thirty-foot whaleboats were lowered, the men were ordered in, and the mates set about teaching them to handle the ponderous ash oars. Compared to going aloft, however, this was child's play. To be sure, the "greenies'" first attempts at pulling the sweeps were dismal failures, but their efforts were evidently earnest; and as they "caught crabs," became inextricably mixed, got in one another's way, and splashed the water, their actions were more ludicrous than exasperating, and even the scowling first mate was forced to smile.

Day after day the mates herded the men into the rigging, and each day, when the sea was calm enough to permit, they were taught to handle the boats, until, at the end of a fortnight, they could fairly lift the craft through the indigo sea, and thoroughly enjoyed racing one boat against another. Meanwhile, too, the majority of them had overcome their terror of going aloft, and were able to clamber to the mastheads, and knew the ropes and rigging well enough to obey orders. But some, despite the bull-dosing and endless blows of the mates, could not get more than a few feet above the decks and clung there, submitting to any amount of punishment rather than go farther. Finding it useless to attempt to force them, the mates abandoned their efforts and put these fellows at deck work.

With indifferent success the *Varela* sailed backwards and forwards, tacking and reaching, cruising in great circles, with men constantly aloft on watch for the tell-tale puff of spray from a blowing whale. A few were sighted and taken, but there was little excitement in the chase—none of the old-time thrill.

No; the *Pedro Varela* was an up-to-date ship in methods, if nothing else. Darting guns had taken the place of the old-fashioned harpoons, and bomb-lances made the death of the whale a safe and simple matter. But the "cutting-in" and boiling were as irksome and as filthy as ever, and the men, though afraid to express themselves openly, grumbled among themselves in the forecastle.

They had been lured by attractive advertisements, glaring posters, and cleverly-worded handbills painting vivid word-pictures of the jolly life of a whaleman, of the strange lands to be seen, of the fortunes to be won from their "lays" of the catch. They had been given an advance of seventy-five dollars each, an outfit of clothes, and board and lodging until aboard the schooner.

Now they realized that they had been hoodwinked. Against the advance was debited all the cost of their outfit, their board, and the commission paid by the owners to the "sharks" who recruited them. They could see that even if the *Varela* sailed home with a full cargo they would not have a red cent coming to them, but would be, if anything, in debt, for every item they drew from the ship's slop-chest was charged against them. They realized, too, that they were little better than slaves, that ceaseless toil, blows, and curses were their lot, and they became gloomy and disgruntled indeed.

"Hully gee!" exclaimed a thick-necked ruffian, whose broken nose and projecting lower jaw bespoke an ex-pugilist. "You guys ain't got no nerve. If I had me gang here I'd mop the decks with them mates. Always cussin' an' knockin' us guys about, an' we workin' like niggers cuttin' in an' b'ilin' to fill their pockets with dough!"

"Shure now, an' would you?" said a red-headed Irishman, sarcastically. "An' after you'd done with them what would you be doin' next? Sailin' the schooner into port? B'gob! 'tis a dog's life we're gettin', but by the saints 'tis a mighty sight better than sittin' behind a barred door with the hangman waitin' for you!"

"No mutiny for me, old skate," declared another. "As Paddy says, bad as 'tis, it's a heap sight better'n gettin' pinched fer mut'ny on the high seas, and twiddlin' yer toes waitin' fer the rope or the electric chair."

And so, being all too familiar with the insides of jails, and fearing the law ashore even more than they hated the life at sea, the crew continued at their duties as the weeks and months wore on. But their discontent increased.

They were not, however, the stuff of which desperate mutineers are made. They thought murder and brooded on violence, but were too much afraid of the officers and too fearful of consequences to resort to drastic measures.

Then, one night, a little weasel-faced Hebrew spoke up.

"Cripes! I've got an idea!" he exclaimed. In low tones he outlined his plan while the others listened, and as he ended a roar of approbation echoed through the forecastle.

"Ye clever little beggar!" cried one admiringly. "Ye've got brains in yer head, blowed if ye ain't!"

In the dark watches of that very same night the hitherto disheartened and dispirited men proceeded to put their comrade's plan into execution. As they paced the deck, the hands on watch glanced furtively about. Against the faint glow of the binnacle light aft they could see the bulky outline of the mate and the dim figure of the helmsman, but on deck it was black as pitch. The sails and boats cast impenetrable shadows, and the men were, they knew, quite invisible from the after-deck. Passing close to one of the whaleboats, a man stopped, reached over the boat's side, and cautiously drew out the darting gun and a bomb-lance. A moment later a tiny splash came from the water alongside as the weapons sank to the bottom of the Atlantic. On the other side of the ship a second man had done the same, and at each turn of their walk along the decks some other implement, utensil, or weapon was dropped into the sea.

By the time day broke over the ocean and the sun rose above the shimmering horizon not a harpoon, lance, boat-spade, or boarding knife remained in the boats, and the men chuckled to themselves at their night's work.

Fortunately for their plans, no whale was sighted that day, and once more, during the velvet-black tropic night, the ocean received implements, tools, and weapons most essential to the chase, the "cutting in" and the boiling of whales. Luck was still with the men, for a second day passed with no hail of "She blows!" from aloft. That night, blubber-hooks, fluke-chains, tackle, and blubber-spades followed the other articles into the depths, and even the carpenter's and cooper's tool-chests were emptied over the schooner's side. Then, to make a clean job of it, the handspikes of the windlass and the ship's grindstone plumped overboard, and the men felt the day was won.

Without the necessary equipment no whales could be caught, no blubber hoisted aboard, no oil tried out. To continue at sea without being able to accomplish anything would, the men reasoned, be a waste of time and money, and they felt certain that, when the loss was discovered, the captain would make for port, where they could one and all desert.

Best of all, to their minds, was the fact that it would be impossible to prove who had disposed of the articles. The things were gone; of course the officers would know that the men were responsible, but they could not single out any member or members of the company as the guilty ones.

Things came to a pass very much as the little Hebrew had foreseen. At midday, the cry "She blows!" rang out, and the men, as usual, rushed to the boats. As the officers leaped in and glanced about to see that all was in readiness, however, there came a volley of curses that might well have shrivelled the paint on the schooner's sides.

With gritted teeth and gleaming eyes the mates swung on the men with clenched fists, but the crew, gaping as if in surprise, and with wonderful expressions of innocence upon their faces, seemed as amazed as their officers. It was hopeless to "lower away," and the captain and his mates paced the deck, swearing, storming, fuming, as they saw the huge cetacean rolling lazily a short distance away as if in mockery of their helplessness. Then, with a yell of triumph, the second mate dashed to his cabin, to return carrying a darting gun and an old-fashioned hand-lance. They were his own property and had been in his cabin, and so had escaped the fate of the other weapons.

Ordering the men into his boat, the officer shoved clear, and the men, rather annoyed, but still realizing they held the trump cards, pulled like mad towards the whale. Half an hour later the whale was "fin up" and the *Varela* bore down towards the victorious mate's boat and the stupendous carcass.

But the whale had been sacrificed for nothing. If the mates and the skipper had been furious before, they were now actually maniacal with rage. There floated the body of an eighty-barrel whale, and yet not a pound of blubber could be stripped from it, not a gallon of oil boiled down. There was

"With gritted teeth and gleaming eyes the mates swung on the men with clenched fists."

not a fluke-chain, a blubber-hook, a spade, or even a boiling kettle on the *Pedro Varela!*

Purple with rage, ready to explode with pent-up anger, the skipper at last gave orders to hoist in the boat and sail away. Then, unable to contain himself longer, he fell upon the mates, cursed them for not preventing the jettisoning of the implements, and ended by ordering every member of the crew to be put into irons except the carpenter, steward, blacksmith, and boat-steerers.

The men offered no resistance. In the first place, the mates, with their "trusties," were armed with revolvers and marlin-spikes; and moreover, it made little difference to the conspirators whether they were ironed or not. In fact, it was, if anything, preferable to their accustomed drudgery.

Then, with his men shackled, the captain set a course for the Azores.

As the rich green islands rose above the sparkling blue sea, and the picturesque town

of Fayal opened before the plunging *Varela*, the captain gave a grunt of satisfaction. He had had time to give the matter some thought, and he had foreseen that there might be difficulties in getting the Portuguese authorities to take action in his unique case. But now his mind was at ease. Swinging to her anchors in the harbour was an American cruiser, her lattice-work masts like floating Eiffel Towers against the azure sky, and quickly to the *Varela's* peak ran the string of gay bunting telling of mutiny aboard and asking for assistance.

Before the schooner came to anchor, a grey cutter was speeding towards her from the warship, its thwarts crowded with white-clad, armed bluejackets, and a spick-and-span lieutenant in the stern.

Quickly they came alongside the *Varela*, and as one man the score of Jackies leaped over the bulwarks with the lieutenant, revolver at his belt, in the lead.

In a few words the schooner's captain told his story, and as he did so, the boyish naval officer bit his lips and choked his efforts to restrain his laughter. But he had the dignity of his uniform and the United States Navy to uphold, and, recovering himself, he ordered the captain to bring the men aft.

They were a mild-looking crowd for mutineers, a most harmless and innocent-appearing lot, and after a few questions the lieutenant shook his head.

"I think I'll take 'em all aboard the cruiser," he declared at last. "It beats me. I'll let the Commander settle the case."

So, bundled into the naval cutter among the grinning bluejackets, the mutineers of the *Pedro Varela* went speeding towards the big grey warship with heartfelt thanks that they had seen the last of the schooner.

Then followed a long and exhaustive examination—cross-questioning, brow-beating, threatening and coaxing. But all to no avail. Each and every man was equally guilty, consequently each and every one swore he was innocent and that he knew absolutely nothing of the matter. The case seemed hopeless. The grizzled commander of the cruiser was in a quandary. He could not sentence the men; his authority only permitted him to detain the guilty ones and transport them to the States for trial, and despite his utmost endeavours he could not determine who *was* guilty. There was only one thing to be done, and the Commander very wisely proceeded to do it. He placed the men under guard, hoisted his anchor, and steamed out of Fayal for the States.

To the whalemen this was an excursion, a picnic, a time of sheer delight. They were served with the best of food, they slept in clean and comfortable quarters, and, although prisoners, their lot was luxurious compared to what it had been on the *Varela*. Word of their unique "mutiny" had spread among the crew of the war-vessel, and the Jackies looked upon it as a huge joke and treated the mutineers right royally, while—best of all—the men were being carried to their native land at Uncle Sam's expense. Their plans had fallen out far better than they had dared to dream, and what the future held in store troubled them not a bit.

In due course the ship arrived in port, and the mutineers were landed, lodged in jail, and the date of their trial set. And then came the most laughable and remarkable part of this most marvellous and humorous mutiny.

Gravely the Judge listened to the charges and to the depositions of the skipper and mates of the *Varela*, and as he listened a puzzled expression came over his face. When the prosecuting attorney finished, His Honour sat deep in thought. At last he spoke.

"I can find no precedent for the procedure of the Court in this case," he announced. "The prosecution has named no defendant, but brings a charge of mutiny on the high seas against a number of men collectively. There is no evidence produced or offered to show, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that any one or all of the defendants were guilty of the alleged acts. No one can swear or has sworn that they were seen committing the act or acts, and there is merely a presumption that they *did* commit them. Moreover, I can find no evidence or allegations in the complaint tending to bear out the extremely serious charge of mutiny on the high seas. Mutiny, according to all our laws and precedents, consists of acts of violence against masters or officers, refusal to obey commands or to carry on the necessary and customary duties of seamen, the seizure of vessels, or insolence or threats to officers or masters.

"The plaintiffs in this case do not allege or even claim that the defendants threatened, were insolent, used violence, or refused to obey orders; on the contrary, it is admitted that they pursued a whale willingly and without hesitation after the loss of the various utensils was discovered and the alleged mutiny had taken place. The Court, therefore, dismisses the charge of mutiny against the defendants. But"—the Judge hesitated and glanced severely at the group of surprised men, although the corners of his mouth twitched—"but," he continued, "the Court is of the opinion that the defendants should be disciplined. The Court therefore finds the defendants guilty of vagrancy and imposes a sentence of ten days in jail!"

Rising, His Honour hurried from the courtroom to his chambers and, had anyone been listening, they would have heard most remarkable and undignified sounds coming from the Judge's sanctum.

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EXPLORATION.

In Central Brazil.

Little Miss Muffet she sat on a tuffet,
On MAN AND HIS NEEDS she doted;
But Pa snatched it away: "You can have curds and whey,"
"But *this* is for ME, be it noted!"

The Editor

The remarkable contents-map of "The Wide World Magazine," showing the locality of every article and story in this splendid number.

"AS I HURRIED OUT ON DECK AFTER HIM I SAW TONGUES OF FLAME LEAPING HIGH NEAR THE RADIO-HOUSE."

(SEE PAGE 424.)

TWENTY-FOUR DAYS ADRIFT

by

G. L. Emmons

ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. HILEY

A grim and terrible epic of the sea, setting forth the appalling experiences that befell the crew of the U.S. steamer *Dumaru*, destroyed by fire and explosion in the Pacific in 1918. Thirty-two men got away in one of the ship's lifeboats. When the little craft finally reached land, after twenty-four days, only fourteen men survived. Here is the tale of their sufferings, faithfully set down from the logs kept by Radio-Operator T. W. Bean and Assistant Engineer F. J. Harmon. "The story is absolutely true," writes Mr. Emmons (who was stationed at Guam and in the Philippines), "and the essential details can be verified from the official shipping records."

THE *Dumaru* was a war-time emergency freighter, built in Portland, Oregon, in the summer of 1918 for the United States Shipping Board. She was a twin-screw vessel of some three thousand tons; and was put together in twenty-eight days. Bad luck followed her from the very beginning of her career, for when she slid from the ways into the Williamette River, in July, 1918, she shot across the stream and crashed into a house-boat. Owing to this mishap, old sailors declared the ship a "Jonah," and said she would be followed by a curse.

On the last day of August, having taken aboard a cargo of coal for San Francisco, she set off on the first lap of her long maiden voyage, which was scheduled to include the ports of San Francisco, Honolulu, Guam, Manila, and the return to the United States. Trouble developed on the very first day out. The ship leaked badly, the pumps and water-lines became clogged, the majority of the crew were seasick, and the inexperienced firemen could not keep up a full head of steam.

The *Dumaru* carried a crew of forty-four. These men had been signed on in Portland at a time when ships were being built faster than experienced crews could be found to man them, shipmasters being forced to accept anyone they could get. Consequently, when the *Dumaru* sailed, her crew consisted for the most part of men who had never been to sea. Some were mere boys, and most of them were foreigners. However, with a few experienced men down below, the *Dumaru* made an average speed of eight knots, and early on the morning of September 4th reached San Francisco. Here many of the crew received a shock when it was announced that the ship was to load a cargo of gasolene (petrol) and explosives. Some of them deserted; but most of the old hands remained with the vessel. After discharging the cargo of coal the forward holds were loaded with drums of gasolene, which later proved to be leaky. The ship then dropped down the bay and took on board a large quantity of explosives, brought out in lighters, which was stowed in the after-holds. This cargo, which consisted of powder, guncotton, dynamite, and "T.N.T.," was consigned to naval stations in the Pacific.

About a week after her arrival in San Francisco the *Dumaru* put to sea on the second leg of her long voyage. Fair weather prevailed during the next ten days, but, as before, trouble developed among the crew, and sundry misfortunes befell the ship. Reaching Honolulu, the *Dumaru* remained in port four days, discharging gasolene and taking on additional stores. Many of the crew deserted, being dissatisfied with the vessel and uneasy as to the outcome of the voyage, their places being filled by Filipino labourers who wanted a free passage to Manila.

On September 26th the *Dumaru* hoisted her anchor and started on the 3,300-mile voyage to Guam. Again the usual troubles occurred, but on October 13th the vessel reached Apra harbour, Guam. After discharging mail and a quantity of naval stores, she was again ready for sea.

Extract from the Log of Radio-Operator Bean, of the "Dumaru."

October 16.

This morning thirty crates were swung into the after-hold of the *Dumaru* with the most elaborate care. Each contained a torpedo-

head. At noon Lieut. E. A. Holmes, U.S.N., a young man of twenty-four, came aboard. He had been assigned to Manila, and was taking passage on the *Dumaru*. We steamed out of the port at about 2 p.m. The high cliff that guards Apra Harbour was still in sight when dark clouds and an oppressive sultriness of the air indicated a tropical storm. Soon the whole sky seemed a huge black shroud. Then a tremendous burst of chain lightning ripped through the clouds, and the sky lit up with an ugly glare. I was in the wireless-room, on the boat deck, and I quickly pulled the lightning switch to protect the set from the high potentials. The supper-bell rang and I hurried below. Huge drops of rain were falling and it was thundering. As I stepped into the messroom there came another blinding flash of lightning. It struck the water a few hundred feet from the *Dumaru*. I sat down and joined in the talk among the officers. There came a third flash of lightning, more terrible than before, and then a solid sheet of flame shot up mast-high from the hold forward of the saloon, while the deck beneath our feet seemed to drop about a foot.

I don't know what the others did, but I obeyed my instinct and rushed at once to the wireless-room. Apparently the lightning had struck somewhere forward, and the gasolene in the forehold was burning. When I saw how it flamed, and thought of the assorted explosives aft, I realized that the ship was doomed.

On the boat-deck some men were already busy at the davits. The flames had swept to the bridge, and were leaping from the teak pilot-house. The radio-house, I knew, would go next. In an instant I had the motor generator going, the transmitter tuned for a broad wave, and the receivers on my head. I pulled the lightning-switch down with my right hand, and grasped the aerial switch with my left. As I did so the safety gap on the "tuner" arced white, my left arm was jerked up, and I felt a terrible burning sensation shoot through it. It was all over in an instant, but my arm hung limp and numb. Recovering myself, I began to tune the receiver, but could hear nothing, not even the static. The safety-gap, I discovered, had fused. The lightning had carried down the antennae, burning out the receiving set. This meant that I could receive nothing, though I could still transmit. There was no time to be lost, so I sent out the distress call over and over again.

Ten minutes later Chief Engineer Howell ran into the room; I could feel a rush of heated air as he threw open the door.

"Come on, 'Sparks'!" he shouted. "The last boat is astern."

As I hurried out on deck after him I saw tongues of flame leaping high near the radio-house; the entire forward part of the ship was a roaring furnace of wood and petrol. I dropped to the next deck and splashed onwards through half a foot of water. The rain was still coming down in sheets, but it seemed to have no effect on the fire.

When I reached the after cargo-deck I saw a lifeboat a hundred feet astern, rolling and pitching in the wind-swept sea. Fearing every moment that the explosives would catch, I dived over the stern and struck out for the boat. My left arm was useless, but the water was warm, and I managed to keep afloat until I was dragged into the boat, which was crowded with thirty-one men. Some were at the oars, trying to hold the craft steady in the heavy seas. I was told that the third mate, with eight men, had pulled away in the first boat launched, leaving the remainder of his shipmates to pile into the boat that I was now in.

Extract from the Log of Asst. Engineer Fred J. Harmon.

At 4.30 we ran into a tropical electric storm, with heavy rain and much lightning. I was in the fire-room. At 5.30 a heavy explosion occurred forward, throwing me against the fire-room bulkhead. I hurried to the boiler-room and found that the bulkhead between the forward hold and the forward bunker had been crushed in. The coal had piled through and was heaped against the boiler fronts. There was only one man near, a fireman named Heavy. We went into the engine-room and found the whole watch safe. The ship's telegraph to engine-room ordered: "Stop both engines." Then the captain ordered us to the boat-deck, where we saw the red glare of fire forward. The upper port lifeboat was gone. The first mate told us that the third mate had lowered the boat and had been ordered to stand by and take part of the crew, but had pulled away with only eight men. I went over to the upper port boat on the windward side, where the captain was steadying a frightened crowd of mess-boys who were trying to get the boat out. The bos'n, myself, and two older sailors took hold and lowered it at the captain's orders, while he went back to his room for his instruments. We rowed to the stern of the *Dumaru* and waited about twenty feet away. By this time the bridge was in flames, and as the boat-deck was directly behind the bridge the men could not lower the other two boats. They jumped overboard in batches and swam to us. The fire swept quickly aft until the wireless house was in flames. "Sparks" was driven from his "S.O.S." calls, and swam out to us. At last only the captain and four men were left on board, and the captain shouted to us that they would try to get a raft over. He went back amidships—right into the fire, it seemed to us. Lieut. Holmes, who had reached the lifeboat, ordered us to let go and drop astern, saying that we could divide

our crowd with the third mate's boat if we encountered it, and then pick up the captain and the others on the raft. Many of the crew protested as we rowed away from the burning vessel, saying that we ought to stand by until the captain got off the ship, but others pointed out that she might blow up at any moment. An old sailor, Jim Ferriter, demanded that we should stop where we were, and all die together if necessary, but at any rate wait for the others. When neither Lieut. Holmes nor the mate ordered the boat to stop, Ferriter, with an oath, threw the mast overboard. Another man struck at him, and they fought as we continued rowing.

When we were more than half a mile away the *Dumaru* blew up, sending a great column of fire into the air. " Sparks " said that the ship had been set on fire by lightning, and the mate said the lightning had hit the foremast and gone through the deck to the gasolene hold. Chief Engineer Howell, however, told us he suspected foul play of German agents.

Extract from Radio-Operator Bean's Log.

The *Dumaru* burned for an hour before she blew up. We were separated from her by more than half a mile when the climax came. It was a magnificent spectacle. We saw the superstructure and hatch-covers shattered and thrown flaming in all directions like comets. The hull was lifted high into the air ; then it turned over and fell back into the water. At the same time heavy reverberations reached our ears and flaming fragments of timber struck the water all around us. The explosion seemed to have opened a pit in the ocean itself, for a few moments later a great rolling swell struck us and passed on. Burning petrol blazed on the water, and the wind swept the fire towards us. We had to row hard to escape it, but after an hour we were out of danger, and the still-burning wreck of the *Dumaru* passed from view. The rain came down in torrents all night. We were thinly clothed, and the thirty-two of us shivered and fought for sheltered places. The night passed amid curses and fights, and the rain half filled the boat with water. Had we foreseen what was to happen we should have saved every drop of it, but we thought we should land at Guam on the following day.

From Engineer Harmon's Log.

At dark we lit flares, and the kerosene lamp was kept swinging, in the hope that we might be seen by a rescuing vessel from Guam, as " Sparks " was certain that his S.O.S. must have been picked up. As our mast had been thrown overboard by the sailor Ferriter, we had to construct another. This Fredette, the carpenter, did by fitting two boards together and standing them in a hole which we chopped in the forward seat. We hoisted sail and started for Guam, which was thirty miles away, and made good progress with the wind at our back. The mate turned over command of the boat to Lieut. Holmes, who said he knew the reefs around Guam. Holmes thought that the strong wind blowing towards the island made it dangerous for us to proceed until daylight. He accordingly ordered the sail down and the sea-anchor out ; and we waited for dawn.

October 17th.

We received a biscuit and half a cup of water this morning and raised sail for Guam. The wind filled the canvas and the boat swung away before it with a sideways motion. I noticed that she would not sail bow-on into the sea, no matter how the mate steered. This was because she was round-bottomed, with no keel and rounded at bow and stern—more like a scow than a boat. It was very buoyant with its air tanks, and quite seaworthy, but it would not tack. We had a fair wind from astern, though, and a moderate sea running. The sun came up after an hour's sailing, and then I could distinctly see the island of Guam ; it seemed like a mountain rising out of the sea. We put out oars and increased our speed, and the island became more and more clear. About 8 a.m. the wind died away altogether, and the boat, despite our rowing, seemed to stop instantly. We rowed hard with ten oars, but could not make headway. The mate put his hand over the side and told us we were in a strong current. Shortly afterwards the wind began to blow off the island. We took down the sails and put two men at each oar, rowing so hard that we broke an oar, but it was impossible to make progress against the combined wind and current. Finally we put out the sea-anchor, to bring the bow of the boat round to the seas, and drifted, waiting for help or a change of wind that would enable us to sail back to the island. The quartermaster said he thought the wind blowing off the island was the regular south-west monsoon, which blows for months without changing.

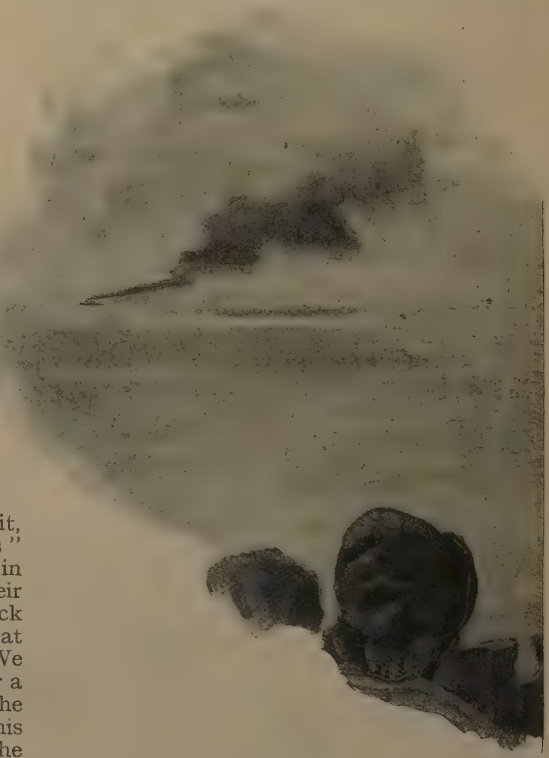
In the afternoon a small steamer hove in view about five miles away on our port quarter. We thought she was looking for us in response to our S.O.S. calls. I, being the smallest, was sent up our improvised mast to wave a red flannel shirt. I waved until my arms ached, but the steamer never changed her course. Lieut. Holmes said she was on a regular voyage around the island.

That evening somebody suggested rationing the water. Two fresh-water tanks holding twenty gallons each were built beneath the thwarts, and we all groaned when a sounding of the first tank showed only about four gallons of water. The second tank contained fourteen gallons. And we had blindly thrown away about a ton of

fresh water that had fallen into the boat the night before! We each received a whisky-glass full of water. All night there was quarrelling and fighting among the men. There was not enough room under the canvas for all of us, so "Sparks," seaman Ole Heikland, and I passed the night in the cockpit at the bow of the boat. The mate and the bos'n, Mike Sutse, stayed in the cockpit at the stern. It was cold and wet, and we could not sleep for the sound of blows and oaths. Wind and current continued to take us farther from Guam. Daylight at 4.30; moderate sea running; the lifeboat rode well. Third Assistant Engineer Mackey pointed to several sand sharks, two small ones and a large one, following the drifting boat. The bos'n tried to snatch one of the sharks with the boathook, but was unsuccessful in the attempt. He then rigged a bent hook on a heaving line, and using a white rag for bait, tried fishing for them, but they were too wise to be caught. Two pilot fish kept close to the big shark. He certainly was a monster. Saw a school of flying fish near by.

At eight o'clock Lieut. Holmes and Chief Engineer Howell gave each man a whisky-glass full of water, a biscuit, and a small square of chocolate. "Sparks" and several others tried dipping the biscuit in sea water, and said it helped. I followed their exa..ple, but did not like it. At nine o'clock the line on the sea-anchor parted, and the boat swung around in the trough of the sea. We took in much water, and it looked bad for a while. Put out oars and tried to hold the boat to the seas. Jennings, an old sailor, his son, the big Russian sailor Linns, and the bos'n rigged out a substitute sea-anchor and fastened it with cable. It worked well. Linns said that the other line had broken because the sharks had chewed it to get the oil from it. Jennings, an able seaman of the fine old type, asked permission of Lieut. Holmes to make an outrigger from gratings in the boat and an oar; this to take the place of a keel and enable us to tack against the wind. Holmes approved the plan and assigned three other men to assist in the work. After hard work thay had the outrigger lashed to the side of the boat, and we hoisted sail and tried to tack. We beat against the wind for about five minutes; then the pressure of water against the outrigger pulled out the nails and caused it to collapse, so we gave up the idea.

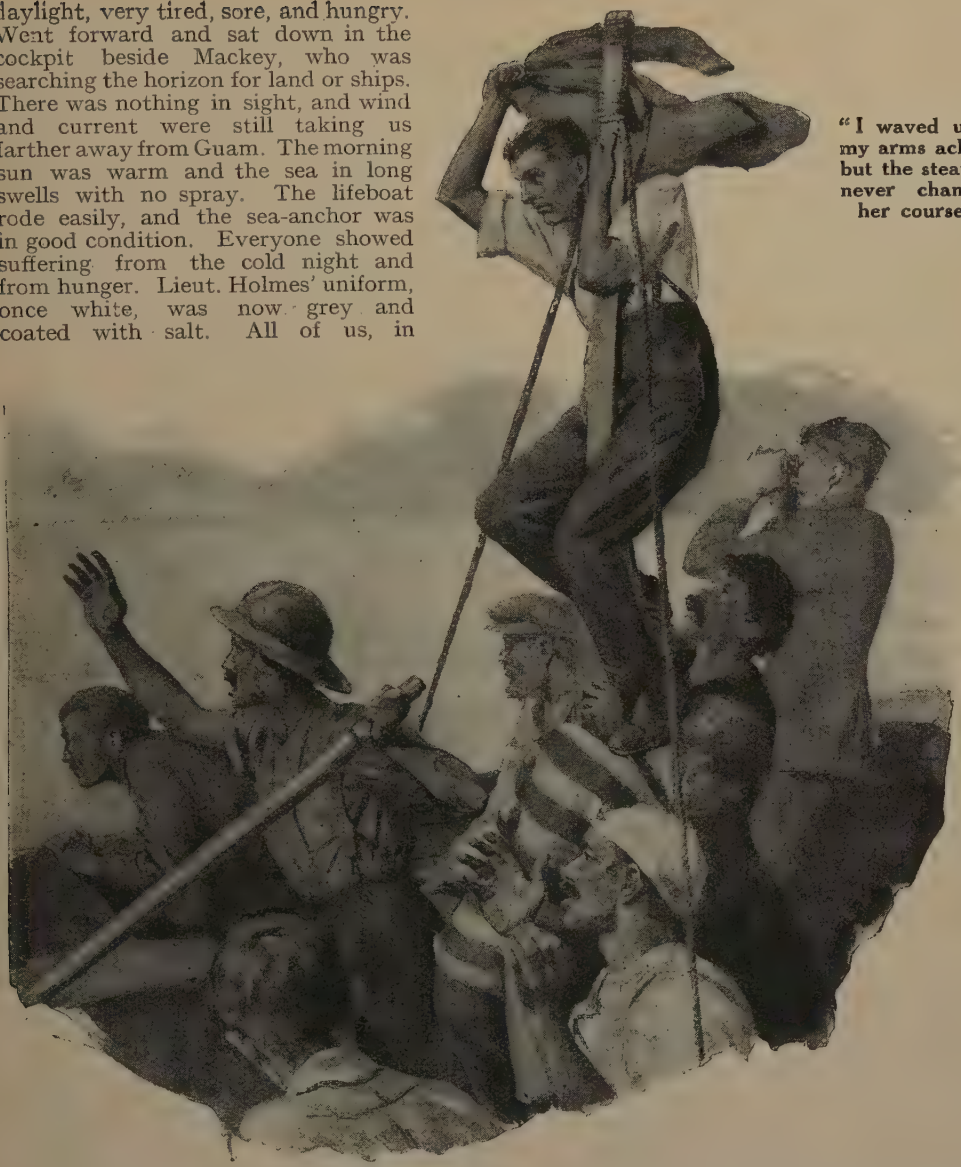
At noon the wind eased up a bit, and Lieut. Holmes ordered the oars out for another try at Guam. We pulled hard all the afternoon, two men to each oar. It nearly killed us in our weakened condition from lack of food, sleep, and water. We did not seem to move at all. At six o'clock there was no sign of the island, and we were all on the point of collapse. We had to give up hope again. A mouthful of water and a biscuit for each, and once more we settled down for the night. By this time the thirty-two of us had gravitated into groups that maintained fixed places in the boat. "Sparks," Third Engineer Mackey, the sailor Ole, the big Russian Linns, Messman



Metcalf, and I held the bow with its cockpit, and any outsider trying to get into our province was kicked out. The mate, Lieut. Holmes, Chief Engineer Howell, and Bos'n Sutse were in the stern, and nobody could steal a seat there. Midships the seat was held by five Filipinos. In the seat forward of them was George the Greek, with four or five men. In the next seat were messmen and coal-passers, mostly boys. There was endless fighting among the Filipinos, and George the Greek hit at them indiscriminately whenever trouble began. Mackey, the mate, and the chief engineer would stop it by coming up with a piece of oar or a hatchet. There was not enough room in the boat for all hands to stretch out and sleep, and some of the men were obliged to sleep sitting up. Finally we eased conditions somewhat by lashing oars across the top of the boat and covering them with the canvas sail, thus giving hammock space for a number of men.

I arose from a bed of oars and canvas at

daylight, very tired, sore, and hungry. Went forward and sat down in the cockpit beside Mackey, who was searching the horizon for land or ships. There was nothing in sight, and wind and current were still taking us farther away from Guam. The morning sun was warm and the sea in long swells with no spray. The lifeboat rode easily, and the sea-anchor was in good condition. Everyone showed suffering from the cold night and from hunger. Lieut. Holmes' uniform, once white, was now grey and coated with salt. All of us, in



"I waved until my arms ached, but the steamer never changed her course."

fact, were covered with salt from the sea-water drying on our clothes. Lieut. Holmes thought it possible for us to reach Seypan, which lies a short distance north of Guam, if we were able to tack by using the oars on one side of the boat. All of us were willing to make the attempt. After water had been passed around in the tin cup, and we had had our biscuit each, we hoisted sail and tried to hold the boat in the wind by using the oars on the sail side. It was of no use, however; she would not tack, so we lowered sail and put out all the oars. We made a little headway against the current, but after two hours had to stop and rest. It was hot and thirsty work, and "Sparks," Jennings, Mackey, and I jumped overboard to cool ourselves. Olsen and Howell drank a little salt water. I swallowed a mouthful as I ducked under. It was cool while going down, but after that it made one more thirsty than ever, and you wanted to try it again. The mate advised us not to drink it, but to suck a button instead.

We threw out the sea-anchor at noon and voted to take half our evening's supply of water. The chief engineer let us have an inch in a cup; it was warm but good. Spread sail across oars and rested under it. The mate removed the canvas cover from a

life preserver and made a peaked hood for himself, using palm and needle. Ole and I lay down on the outside space at the bow. I fell asleep, but in a few minutes jumped up wide awake, for the bos'n shouted that there was a lifeboat over our stern. I saw something bobbing up and down about a mile off, so we put out all oars and headed for the supposed craft. It seemed like a lifeboat until we came close, and then it proved to be a large section of bolted planks. Other timbers floated near, and we saw that we had reached the wreck of the *Dumaru*. There was another large object several miles off, which looked like a ship, and we nearly jumped overboard with joy, thinking that some vessel had discovered the wreckage and was standing by. As we pulled toward it we passed through great quantities of wreckage, mostly wooden cases that had covered gasolene cans, and presently we discovered that the object that had gladdened us was part of the hull of the *Dumaru*, riding with keel up and decks under water. It was a portion of the stern, and we could plainly see the two propellers shining in the sun. We wondered what gave the hull its buoyancy, and the chief engineer explained that there were six empty fresh-water tanks in the shaft-alley near the stern.

We had a long discussion as to whether we should tie to the propellers and stay with the wreck. Some thought if we did this we should have a better chance of being picked up, for a passing ship could see the wreck from a distance of five miles. In the end, however, we decided that the floating wreckage was too dangerous for us. The metal lifeboat, riding high on a big swell, would be punctured like a paper bag if it came down on the end of a spar. We searched for food—boxes of milk, canned goods, anything—and for several hours turned over every box we saw, but found nothing but empty gasolene cases. Had we known what was coming we should have collected all the wood we could carry.

We pulled into the wind for several hours, and then threw over the sea-anchor and had the usual mouthful of water and a biscuit each. Meanwhile the officers and several of the older sailors discussed our position. Our encounter with the wreck of the ship led us to believe that we were much farther from Guam than we had thought, for wind and current must have carried the derelict a long way during the past three days. We all felt downhearted, and after a long discussion came to the conclusion that by drifting at night with the sea-anchor out we were putting too many miles between ourselves and the island. We decided that we would try to hold our own against the wind and current by taking watches and keeping four oars going all night. I was given the ten to twelve watch with Mackey, "Sparks," Linns and Ole. Linns and Ole relieved each other at the steering oar; they were inseparable pals. At midnight I turned in beside "Sparks." We gave our places in the bow to young sailor Bolin, who was sick, and lay down ourselves under a seat. The carpenter refused to take his watch at the oars, saying he was "all in." Francisco Bendicto, a Filipino fireman, took his place. Ole said he thought we must be a hundred and fifty miles off Guam, and that even if our S.O.S. call was picked up, they would never find us. Mackey told him to keep quiet, as the crew had been irritable all day. Olsen and Shaw, the negro cook, had a long argument about our position. Usual fight between George the Greek and Francisco Bendicto over life-preserver and the position of the boat. Gave trousers of my suit to Samuelson, an oiler, who had nothing but his engine-room clothing. The steward was sick; his shoulders were terribly burned by the sun; he could not lie down. No one could sleep, for all were hungry and thirsty.

October 21st.
Fifth day in the lifeboat.

We held our own against wind and current by keeping the oars going constantly. We felt that our only hope of being rescued from Guam in response to "Sparks'" S.O.S. was to hold our position. The rowing caused terrible thirst and our water was getting lower and lower. Some of the men could not or would not take their turn at the oars. Some were sick. Shaw, the negro cook, refused to do his share of the labour. He lay in the bottom of the boat and called for water. He got it from Mackey—a full pail of salt water in his face and mouth. He crawled under the seat, away from the feet of the men who were rowing, and cursed all who came near him, especially Olsen and the chief engineer, who told him he was "yellow" for giving in when smaller men were hard at it. Young Bolin and Jim Kane, who were ill from thirst, were not called upon to stand a watch at the oars. Bolin was given the bow of the boat to lie in, and was covered up with Ole's oilskin. Kane had a place in the shade under the sail. "Sparks" was a wonder; he was only a boy, but did a man's work. Mackey was the most energetic of all. He never tired and was the enemy of all who lay down on the job. He cursed them constantly. Shaw would not do his bit and Mackey continually "went for" him. He told the negro that he was "as yellow as his hide." "I was never a slave to any white man, nor were my ancestors," retorted Shaw. "I was born in Argentine, and I am as white as any man in the boat. I refuse to work because it is useless. We sha'n't be saved, and we are all going to die." Throughout the day he continued to repeat that he was no white man's slave, and all the kicks of the crew

and the dousings of water could not make him take a turn at the oars. All day the wind blew off Guam. Towards evening it increased to a light gale.

October 22nd.
Sixth day in the lifeboat.

We were still keeping two-hour watches at the oars, trying to hold our position against wind and current. The day broke fair with high wind off Guam; sea in long swells. At eight o'clock Lieut. Holmes and the chief engineer gave out water and sea biscuits. We washed out the boat by working two pumps and letting water flow out through bailing holes. Took baths in water from pumps. Shaw and two Filipinos were forced under pumps and washed. The sun beat down on us all day and we suffered greatly from thirst as we rowed. Hunger had left us all, and nothing was desired or spoken of save water. The lack of food and water could be seen in the gauntness of the crew. Shaw still refused to work. He lay on his back with his face to the sun and groaned all day and night. A school of dolphins circled the boat at 7.30 p.m. and stayed around us all night as we continued rowing. No sign of sharks. We saw several schools of flying fish during the day. The wind increased at nightfall. We put a lantern on the mast to attract flying fish or steamers if any should pass during the night.

October 23rd.

We have now been just a week in the lifeboat, and how many miles we are off Guam I do not know. We have ceased rowing and are drifting, bow to the seas, with sea-anchor out. Lieut. Holmes says there is more than five miles of water under us, as we are in the vicinity of the deepest soundings ever recorded. Five miles of water and only six gallons left to drink! Mackey, Howell, Waywood, Lieut. Holmes, and I decided that we would have to cut down the water supply, although we are suffering horribly from the lack of it. We get about four ounces twice a day. The food is going fast, too. All hands are worried and angry. George, the Greek fireman, hit Francisco Bendicto, the little Filipino coal passer, twice to-day and knocked him down. We are all getting salt-water boils. The fighting at the centre of the boat is constant. Second Engineer Olsen and Chief Engineer Howell have been sitting aft all day and arguing with First Mate Waywood and Lieut. Holmes as to our position. Holmes said we were near Seypan Island, that tacking had carried us that way. Olsen replied: "You know very well that you can't shove a Ludin lifeboat against the wind."

To-day I asked "Sparks" whether he was sure he got the S.O.S. off before we left the *Dumaru*, and he answered that he was positive of it. I remarked: "It is very strange when we were only twenty-three miles off one of the largest radio sets in the world that we have not been picked up by one of the Navy patrols."

All day we talked of our position, the wind, the current, the Philippines, and our chances for making those islands. Then we discussed the food and water, and the more we talked the drier our tongues became. About four o'clock we concluded, after much talk, that we would take water only in the morning, and that it would be the usual amount—one inch in the bottom of the chocolate can. The biscuit, we decided, would be given in the evening. After that had been settled we again talked of the Philippines and of our chances of reaching them. They were a long way off, but we could head toward them if we put up sail. The mate, chief engineer, "Sparks," and I were for it, as were some of the sailors, our strong point being that we might sight one of the transports. Holmes and many of the others said that we should die of thirst and starvation before we got half way. After more debating the officers agreed with the mate that we were in the monsoon winds, which blow for weeks without changing. Mackey said: "To end all kicking, let's have a vote. Hang on or head for the Philippines; majority rules." Hands were raised on the question of going, and twenty-three were counted in favour of trying the Philippines. Ole Heikland and I hove in the sea-anchor, Linns and "Chips" hooked in the sail, the wind filled the canvas, and we started on our fourteen-hundred-odd mile voyage to the Philippines—and this after we had spent day after day at the oars to keep ourselves from drifting in that direction!

October 24th.
Eighth day in the lifeboat.

The wind held strong and steady from the north-east. We no longer stood watches at the steering oar; it was useless to try to put the boat out of the wind's eye, and we were not exact about the Philippines, anyway, save that if the wind held we should eventually land on them somewhere, since they stretched out for some two thousand miles across our path. Whether any of us would be alive when we reached them no one could tell. I had great confidence in Mate Waywood; he was a born seaman, and repeated time and again: "Our boat will reach the Philippine Islands. Maybe I won't see them, and if I don't no one will. All the same, this boat is going there; the north-east monsoon will carry it." He sat in the stern all day and part of the night watching the compass, to detect any change in the wind. With his peaked cap and cape he looked like Robinson Crusoe, and his red sea-boots matched his red whiskers, which had grown long. Lieut. Holmes, Chief

Engineer Howell and Bos'n Sutse all sat aft near the mate, and they were always arguing.

At noon the chief engineer sounded the after water-tank, and gave us a great shock when he said: "The tank is empty!" He removed it from under the seat and brought it up for inspection. It contained only two cups of water! Howell said there should have been at least a gallon, for the night before it had showed half an inch on the sounding stick. Olsen accused Shaw, the negro cook, of stealing the water; and several men said they had seen him trying to remove the spigot, which had been tied in. Shaw denied the theft and called Olsen and the sailors liars; he accused them of stealing the water and trying to put the blame on him. We examined the forward tank and found about half as much as should have been there. We removed this tank from its place and lashed it to the top of the seat, where everybody could watch it. We had our biscuit and water—just enough to wet our throats, and I don't think it got any farther. I soaked my biscuit in salt water. Some ate their biscuits and drank salt water.

It looked as if Shaw would soon die. He lay at the bottom of the boat, with the sun beating on his face, and made no effort to get in the shade of the sail or to cover himself with canvas from the life preservers. I believed he was fast losing his reason. He cried for "water" by the hour. He knew he would not and could not get any, and when he grew too loud in his cursing and moaning, somebody threw a bucket of sea water in his face, which cooled and quieted him for a while.

The loss of our water seemed to cause Chief Engineer Howell to abandon all hope of being saved. He came forward and talked to me most mournfully. "Well, you and I have seen something of life," he said, "but it is hard on young 'Sparks,' only seventeen years old, to have to die in this way."

I told him that though I had seen some life I hoped to see much more, as I expected to get through. We had a chance of being picked up and, if not, maybe we could reach the islands. He replied that it was useless to talk of the islands when we had only four gallons of water for thirty-two men, and the islands at least twelve hundred miles away. He then turned from me and started to carve his name and address on the oak strip that extended around the boat; while doing this he talked of his wife and his home in San Francisco. Other men who had knives began to carve, and soon the whole strip of wood was covered with the history of the wreck of the *Dumaru*.

At four o'clock I was unable to stand the heat and thirst any longer. I called to several of the men to put a bailing pump over and to wet one another down. We all took a turn under the pump except Shaw, but we pulled him under and gave him a good wetting. I stood the ten to eleven watch and then lay down to a sleepless, thirsty night of suffering.

October 25th.
Ninth day in the lifeboat.

The hot sun forced me to leave the bow this morning and go aft for a wet-down. The wise ones were soaking moisture into their bodies by pumping sea-water over themselves. Shaw, lying on his back, started his endless chattering, which put my nerves on edge. I gave orders to wash down the boat, and Mackey got busy with the "never-moves," as he called the ones who would not stir unless forced to. Shaw, who we now knew was insane, was left lying. Mackey wetted him down while cleaning the boat.

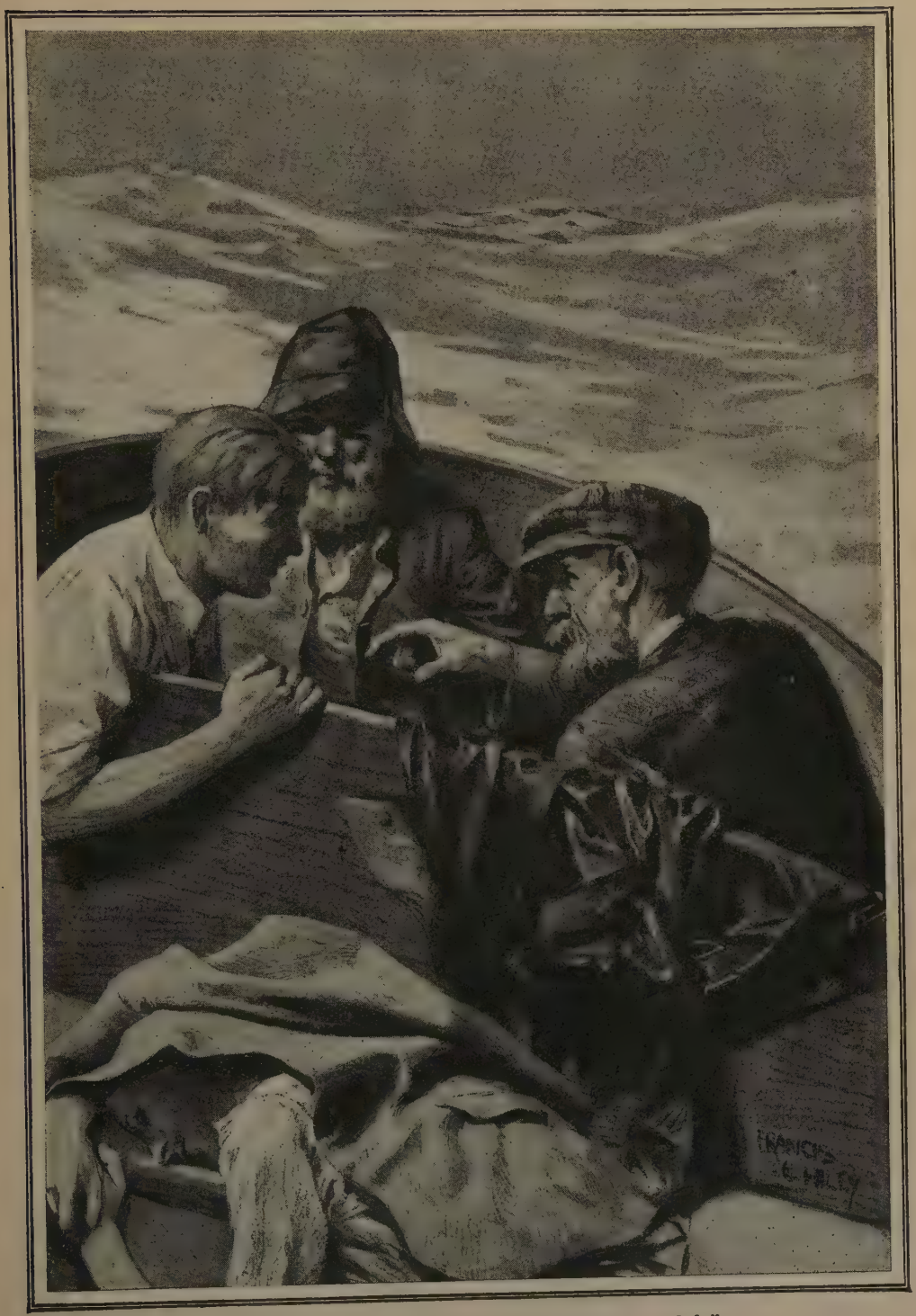
Chief Engineer Howell sounded the tank with a stick and reported only three inches of water. It was going fast; at the rate we were using it we had enough left for only four days.

After making the sounding the chief walked aft, sat down, and said: "It's no use, men; we are done!" Lieut. Holmes talked with him for about an hour, and then Holmes came forward and asked me if I thought it possible to make a condenser, using a water bucket as a furnace for the fire, a cracker can for the salt water container, a piece of garden hose about three feet long for the vapour pipe, and the empty water-beaker to hold the vapour condensed. I said I thought the plan a good one, and I saw no reason why the apparatus should not work if constructed right.

When I inquired about fuel he said that we could use the oars, the grating at the bottom of the boat, some of the seats, the combing round the boat, our shoes, and a few of the life-preservers. I told him I did not think that would be enough to make more than a gallon of water, and I wished we had picked up some of the wood floating around the wreck. "A gallon of fresh water may save our lives," he told me. "Then let's get busy," I said.

While Holmes and I were talking, Mackey had an idea. Very thirsty from an unusually large drink of salt water that he had taken, and frightened by the thought of our soon being entirely out of fresh water, it occurred to him that the air tanks that buoyed the boat up might contain some fresh water that had leaked in from the rain, or been left in when the builders had tested them. He pounded at the nuts that held down the manhole plate and finally removed them. Joyfully he reported that ten gallons of water had collected on the port side, where the sail gave the boat a slight list.

The chief engineer said he would go down and test the water to see if it was fresh,



"Ole told me excitedly how he had caught the fish."

and he ordered several men over to the port side to give the boat still more of a list. He took a cup with him and soon appeared with his head and shoulders above the manhole, with some water in the cup. After tasting it he said that it was half fresh and half salt, but he thought we could drink it. He passed the cup to me, asking me to try it. I drank half a cupful, for my throat was burning, but it caused me to cough and choke and I found that it contained turpentine and particles of red lead, with which the inside of the tank was heavily coated. The chief went back into the tank and passed water up to Mackey, who gave out equal parts to all. Some could drink it and some could not. Bolin and Olsen, who were very weak and sick, had given up all hope of living, and they drank salt water at every opportunity, although the others took it away from them whenever they noticed it. Shaw could not drink his ration of water and would not rise to take it; when we poured it into his mouth he turned on his side and let it run out. Afterwards the men complained of a burning in their throats, no doubt caused by the turpentine in the water. Meanwhile I started to construct the condenser and was aided by Chief Howell, Mackey, and "Sparks." We cut the water pail and made a furnace of it, chopping the metal with two hatchets. It was a hard job and took most of the afternoon. While we were working the mate and Lieut. Holmes took apart one of the bilge pumps to get the quarter-inch rod out of it with which to make a gaff. They wanted to try to hook the dolphins that swam partly under the boat in the evenings and near the boat in daytime. Late in the afternoon the wind died down, making it safe for the stronger men to take a dip in the sea. Bos'n Sutse tied a short line amidships so that we could be towed through the water, each man in his turn, while others stood by on the lookout for sharks. The effort of getting back into the boat taxed my strength to the limit, and some of the men had to lie down after getting aboard. I stood the ten to twelve watch and then found a place where I shivered through the night. It was chilly after dark, for we were weak and bloodless.

October 26th.
Tenth day in the lifeboat.

Mackey and "Sparks" put in the morning making a gaff out of the pump rod. At noon the chief gave out water from the air tank, and those who could drink it accepted it. Olsen, Bolin, and Kane refused it, saying it only made them more thirsty. We put Shaw in a sitting position and gave him his portion of water. To our surprise he drank it. Mackey said: "He is not crazy, but acting sick or insane to get an extra portion of water." I spent several hours talking with "Sparks" and Mackey, who were trying to put a hole in the top of the empty biscuit can in which to fit the hose that was to be the vapour pipe for our condenser. I aided them for awhile. When the sun became too hot I went to the bow to see if I could claim half of Ole's oilskin coat for shade. When I looked over the combing forward I saw Ole and the big Russian Linns sitting on the sea-anchor and cutting up a flying-fish. When Linns saw me he quickly covered the fish with his coat. I asked him where he had caught it; he put his finger to his lips and motioned to me to come into the cockpit. I managed to squeeze in with them and Ole told me excitedly how he had caught the fish. No one had seen him but Linns, and they were about to divide the fish between them, as it would not have been enough to go round if divided between thirty-two men. I managed to catch "Sparks's" eye, without attracting attention, and when he came forward Linns divided the fish into four equal parts, and we ate it slowly as it was very fresh. The little fish was not much for four men, but it helped to slake our terrible thirst and hunger and gave us some strength.

October 29th.
Thirteenth day in the lifeboat.

From Radio-Operator Bean's Log.

Death paid his first visit to our boat this day; but it was with a feeling of relief that we saw Charlie Shaw pass away. For three days he had raved wildly, grovelling on his stomach in the bottom of the boat, his superstitious mind filled with nightmares of terrible deaths. With groans, screeches, prayers, and curses he had kept us awake and nervous, and it had added greatly to the fearful strain under which we were living.

A short ceremony was held, the chief repeating a prayer over the body, and then we buried him over the side clothed as he was. The body sank at once. Sharks flashed away from the boat's side; they had not followed for thirteen days for nothing! Curiously enough we saw no more of them after this date. The last drop had gone from our fresh water tanks. We could only pray for rain and work hard on our condenser. Our chances of being picked up by a passing vessel seemed less as the days passed. Standing one-hour watches each, we kept a constant lookout at bow and stern. We strained our sunken eyes into the night, hoping that somewhere a light would shine for us. But always darkness and stillness prevailed, the stillness broken only by the lapping of the waves against the boat, or by an occasional prayer of a shipmate that we might be saved. Some of us, though, tried hard to keep up our cheerfulness so as to help those near the breaking-point.

November 2nd.
Seventeenth day in the lifeboat.

The temptation to drink salt water was too great for some of us. Before daylight to-day the chief engineer and the second assistant, George Olsen, lost all reason and succumbed to the lure of the masses of water about us. Olsen, knowing that it would mean his death, swallowed nine cups of brine. Howell used a little more discretion but drank too much. By dawn Olsen was raving and we looked for his end any hour. Howell's eyes became glassy, but his reason remained with him. We received our last sea biscuit to-day, but cared little; it was not hunger that troubled us, but the terrible thirst. For four days we have had no water whatever. Our throats burned like fire and our tongues were swollen. It became difficult for us to talk; so we wasted no effort on conversation. The sea stretched out in glassy calmness. We lowered ourselves over the side once a day, soaking our clothes and bodies. This sapped a great deal of our strength, but the moisture absorbed through our pores more than made up for it.

After Olsen became delirious two other men lost their reason in quick succession. One was Frankie Bolin, the young deck boy who had been ill throughout the trip. The other was Ernie Hedginger, a seaman. He was a young man, too, but of average strength. He raved loudly and thrashed about, glassy-eyed. Unnoticed, he got hold of an axe and tried to split his head open. Curley Walgant, a sailor, stopped him. "I have a nail in my head," screamed poor Ernie. "Let me chop it out! I must chop it out!" Olsen's strength ebbed rapidly and before noon he lay stiff and cold in the stern of the boat. After a short prayer the corpse sank beneath the shimmering surface of the Pacific. In a few hours Frankie Bolin joined him, and then Ernie Hedginger. Three men died in one day. It was inevitable that others would follow. We began to ask whether any of us would survive. But no; we must keep up hope until the last breath. Old seasoned salts who had not prayed since their childhood were now bowing their heads and asking God to give us a speedy deliverance.

November 4th.
Nineteenth day in the lifeboat.

Our condition had now become ghastly. Pete Wieland, a fireman, had turned delirious, and several others were on the verge of insanity. Christensen, the little Danish steward, suffered terrible agony. His shoulders had been blistered by the heat of the tropical sun and irritated by salt water until great sores formed on them. His face was drawn with pain and he could scarcely utter a word. Jim Kane, messman, Antonio Orque and H. Jennings, able seamen, all died and were put overboard to-day. Jennings was a fine old English salt who had devoted all his life to the sea. He had taken his eighteen-year-old son, Stafford, with him on the *Dumaru*. Now this boy had to sit and watch his father in frenzied ravings, helpless to aid him in the death agony that ended the old sailor's life. Eddie Howell, who had hastened his death by drinking sea water, realized that he could not live long. He was still sane to-day, but understood that at any moment he might pass into delirium.

A few hours after Eddie became delirious, and at evening was talking insanely of Alaskan mountain springs, cool fresh rivers, and jugs of wine. As with all the others who had died, his ravings centred about sweet water.

November 5th.
Twentieth day in the lifeboat.

To-day our condenser was completed. The pipe-joints were wrapped with cloth to prevent as much leakage as possible; then, partly filling the "boiler" with sea water, we built a hot fire in the bucket beneath it. We had to chop up the rest of the oars and use the cork filling of several life-preservers for fuel. Only a few signal torches remained for ignition. The water boiled; the steam ran into the water tank and was held there, and we chilled it by pumping brine over the tank. We worked hard for several hours, taking turns at the fire and breaking up oars for fuel. I was ready to give up at one time, feeling that my last bit of strength had gone. But Mackey, working hard himself, goaded me on. He refused to let me give in for a moment, built up my dwindling will-power, and really saved my life.

After using up nearly all our fuel, we sounded the tank and found a very small quantity of water in it. Rationed out, it gave each of us two tablespoonfuls, but even this small amount allayed for a moment the awful pangs we suffered. Thanks to the resourcefulness of Harmon and Mackey, we could cheat death a little while longer.

Pete Wieland became delirious to-day. He imagined that we were coming to a rocky coast and could not make a landing with the sail set. Waiting his chance, he cut our canvas loose with a safety razor blade. It might have been disastrous for us all, as the sail might have been lost. Thereafter we had to keep a close guard over the poor fellow. Since the sharks ceased following our craft, great schools of dolphins have played around our boat day and night. After making vain attempts to catch them with an improvised hook and line, Mackey and big Karl Linns made a gaff from a bailing-pump rod, scraping a point with a jack-knife. On the evening of this day the gaff proved successful. Big Karl leaned over the side watching. Suddenly a dolphin would dart out from below the boat and Big Karl would hook at it.

Miss after miss, and still the Russian continued patiently. At last we saw a flash of blue and he swung a struggling thirty-pounder into the boat. Two Filipinos made a dive for the fish and buried their teeth in it like a pair of hungry dogs. Forcing them away, we hit the dolphin on the head and congratulated the big Russian on his success. After all had received a portion we put the best of the fish in the pot and cooked it in the brine. After boiling it we found that the cooked fish was too dry and salty to eat, and we threw it overboard. Meanwhile Mackey had tried his hand at the gaff. He, too, was finally successful and brought up a fair-sized dolphin. We had learned a lesson from the first fish, so the juicy meat of the second was cut into equal parts and eaten raw. In ordinary circumstances raw fish is not very appetising, but to us it was exquisite and the blood of the dolphin served as a fair substitute for water.

November 6th.
Twenty-first day in the lifeboat.

Poor Pete Wieland's crazy brain told him that we were taking his life away when we refused to lower the sail for a landing on his visionary island. He became sullen and morose and moaned to himself constantly: "They won't land. They won't land. We will die. We will die—die—die!" He passed away still muttering these words.

Soon after Pete's death the first suicide occurred. Christensen, the little steward, had suffered inconceivable pain from his infected shoulder. At last the breaking-point came. Sitting on the gunwale beside his shipmates, he suddenly threw himself over backwards into the sea, drifted rapidly astern before any of us could do anything, and sank beneath the smooth surface. I envied him; yet I had the same opportunity to end my suffering, but I told myself that while there was life there was hope. I noticed that when a shipmate gave up hope he soon passed into a state of delirium, with death following fast.

Toward evening we began again the task of distilling fresh water. Our fuel supply had reached a low mark; only a few oars and three signal torches remained. We could not use any more life-preservers without signing our death warrants should we drift to the surf-beaten Philippine shore. Several pairs of shoes were burned, however, and they gave a slow hot fire. We condensed enough steam this time to give each man a tablespoonful of water. Every drop was a unit of energy to us.

Dusk had fallen when Big Karl again tried his hand at gaffing dolphins, and once more he was successful. We feasted on a twenty-pound fish and thanked God.

George, the Greek, had been growing violent as his insanity progressed, and about midnight he found a huge jack-knife that we kept in a canvas bag under a thwart. He seized it eagerly, evidently intending a magnificent massacre of his shipmates, but he had scarcely made a move before he was jumped on by several of his intended victims and bound to a thwart, his eyes blazing with insane fury. It was the first case of violence we had had to deal with.

November 7th.
Twenty-second day in the lifeboat.

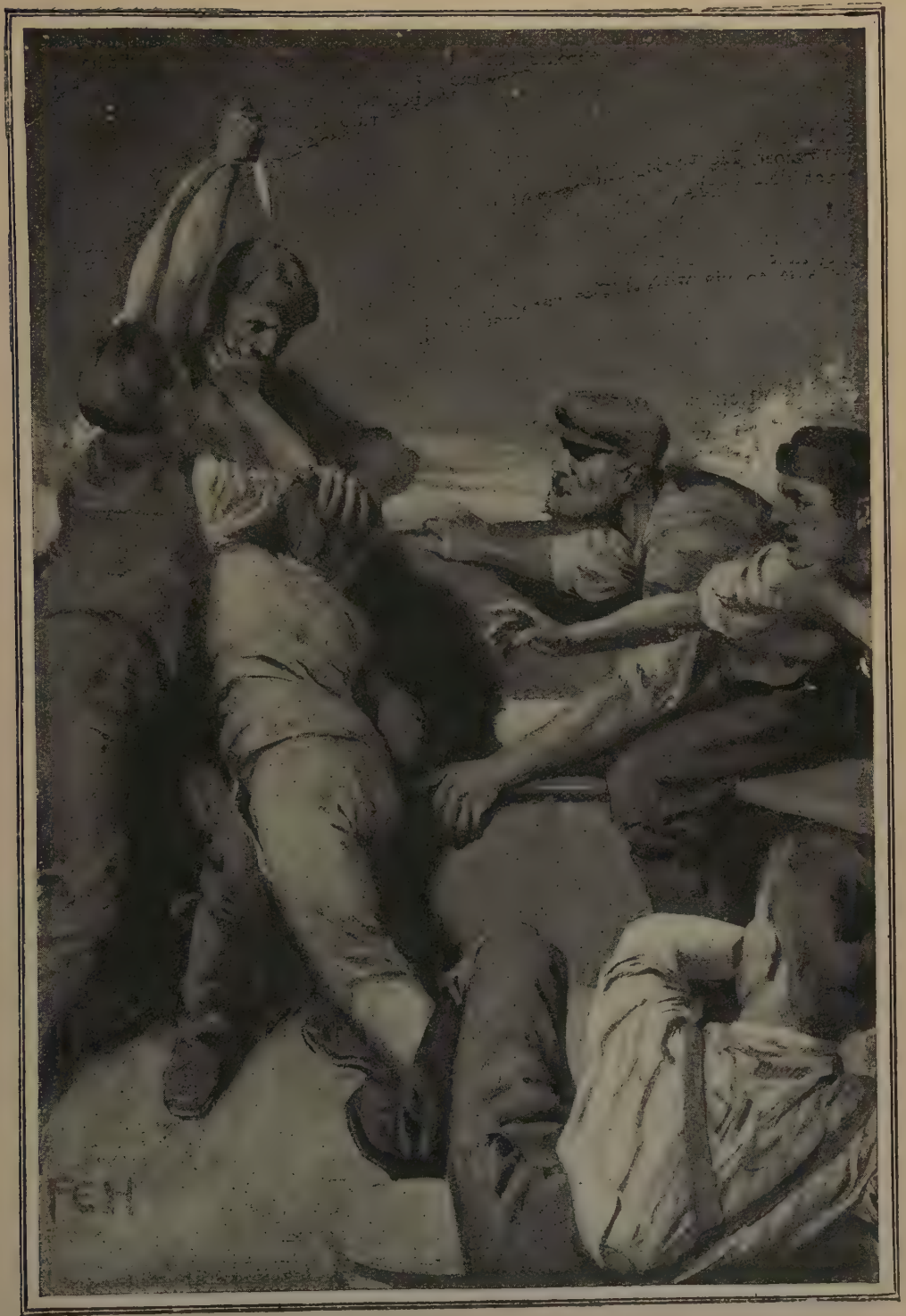
Four men died to-day. George, the Greek, weakened so rapidly that we soon released him, and it was not long before he was stiff and cold. T. Wood, a fireman, went next, and then Harold Sampson, an eighteen-year-old messman. He had seemed stronger than his elder brother, who sat beside him, but suddenly he lapsed into a stupor and in an hour was dead. His brother frantically called to him to wake up.

That fine old seaman, Jim Ferriter, had tried to cheer his mates throughout the long days of agony. Many times we had strained our eyes hopefully thinking that a formation of clouds on the horizon was land, and nearly all those who had died had seen beautiful green hills ahead. But Jim Ferriter, strong and brave, had made a vow that he would not pronounce the magic word "land" until he had seen real land and not an apparition. To-day, when the sun was at its zenith, he stood his turn on watch at the bow of the boat. The hawklike eyes of the old seaman were fixed on the horizon dead ahead. Suddenly he called out: "It's ours at last, boys. There is land ahead!"

We struggled eagerly to our feet and stared. It certainly appeared as if there was a mountainous coast far away on the western horizon. Could it be possible? But alas! in an hour the "land" had broken in two parts and drifted along the horizon, one part being wafted upwards. To us it was a customary disappointment; cloud-banks had deluded us before. But Jim had believed with all his heart that he was right. A great change came over the hardened seafarer. With mouth drooping and eyes glazed he sat despondently in the bow. In a few hours he fell into a stupor, and before night we had delivered him to the ever-open arms of Davy Jones.

November 8th.
Twenty-third day in the lifeboat.

Not only did hunger and thirst torment us, but by now our bodies were covered with salt water boils from the chafing of the brine-soaked clothing on our skin. Sun-burned shoulders did not trouble us now; they had tanned a deep brown. For some reason our finger-nails had also turned a deep brown. Our faces were hideous, the bones standing out in bold relief, the eyes sunken and glazed, the lips blackened and cracked. To-day everybody remained sane



"He had scarcely made a move before he was jumped on by several of his intended victims."

until evening, though the deadly lure of the sea-water had taken us all more or less. We drank as much as two cups a day, and after each draught our parched throats burned more terribly than before. Late in the afternoon Pedro Lopez lost his self-control and drank cup after cup of the brine. It was the old story; by dusk he was dead. The naval officer, Lieut. Holmes, talked to me a great deal about this time, and I saw that his confidence was waning. At midnight he confided to me that he could not last much longer. He handed me his watch, saying that if I lived and he did not I was to give it to his wife, who was then in Manila, and repeat to her a message that he gave me. I suspected nothing unusual. An hour later I took my turn as lookout in the bow. A few minutes later I heard a splash at the stern, and a hoarse whisper: "There goes Holmes!"

November 9th.
Twenty-fourth day in the lifeboat.

The merciless tropical sun had scarcely begun to scorch us when it was lost to view behind a great cloud-bank. The entire sky darkened, lightning flashed, thunder rumbled, and almost immediately the heavens let loose a torrent of water. We scrambled to lower the sail to catch what we could of the flood. The two drinking-cups were grabbed up savagely; we opened our mouths wide and threw our heads back. In a minute, however, the downpour ceased as suddenly as it had begun and the sun glared at us. We squeezed the water from our clothes, licked the thwarts and gunwales like a pack of dogs, and sucked the wet sail. About eleven o'clock the bos'n whispered hoarsely: "That looks like land right ahead!" We strained our tired eyes, but we were very sceptical; we had been deceived too often. But after an hour's sailing we saw that, without any doubt, a mountainous coast lay ahead.

Our thoughts became a jumble of happy visions, but presently we were brought back to earth by First Mate Waywood, with his practical disposition. As we approached the welcome land we could see a heavy surf beating on the coral reefs, and we tried to guide our boat towards one of the widest and safest-looking parts of the beach. The nearer we came to the surf the more tremendous it looked. We dropped our sail and all hands put on life-preservers save "Chips" and I; we felt we could do better unhampered.

At about 5 p.m. our craft came to the first line of rollers. A breaker caught the boat full on the stern and we were swept forward on the crest. A second wall of water bore down on us, and again the boat rode the sea gallantly. We were now within eight hundred yards of the shore, which appeared excellent for landing—a beautiful white beach, above which we could see a high ridge covered with tropical vegetation. Meanwhile the third breaker formed behind us, rising to an almost impossible height, with an angry, foaming crest. As it loomed behind us we realized that our boat could not ride it, and we jumped for our lives at the precise moment that the great breaker caught the stern of the boat, flinging it end over end like a cork. An instant later I struck the bottom and grasped at the rough coral to prevent the undertow from taking me out to sea. I came to the surface gasping for breath, only to be struck by another comber. Again I was beaten against the coral bottom, but I held on doggedly. The next wave flung me towards the shore and on to a coral ledge which was submerged only a few feet.

I could make out some of the other men staggering to the same reef, and getting to my feet I saw my friend Harmon stumbling aimlessly about, his body and face covered with blood. I floundered to his side and, with the aid of another man, helped him through the swift waist-deep water to the shore. Others came tumbling ashore after us and lay exhausted. When we had recovered we had a roll-call and discovered that two men, Ole Heikland and Francisco Bendicto, were missing—no doubt lost in the surf. Fourteen of our original complement of thirty-two survived, as follows:—

First Mate Waywood.
Fred J. Harmon, first assistant engineer.
Herbert Mackey, third assistant engineer.
Theron W. Bean, radio operator.
Michael Sutse, boatswain.
Stafford Jennings, seaman.
Lyle Sampson, seaman.
Frank Fredette, carpenter.
Karl Linns, seaman.
L. Samuelson, oiler.
Melvin Metcalf, messman.
Casper Weigant, fireman.
Two Filipinos (names on register).

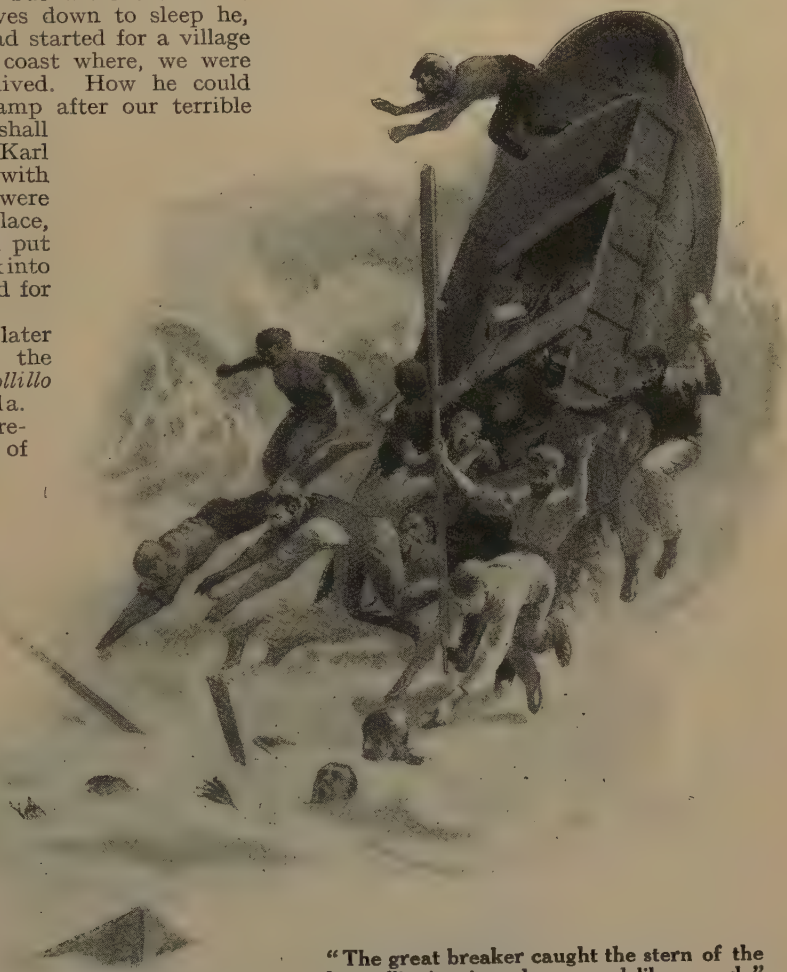
Dusk was now settling, but after a short rest we began a search for water. Big Karl Linns roused us to activity; while the others were scarcely able to move he, with his inexhaustible strength, was up and going. Four of us followed him and we plunged into the jungle, but in a little while two men were so tired out that they returned to the beach. Samuelson and I threw ourselves down for the night, being unable to keep on our feet any longer. The big Russian, however, kept on. It was a couple of days before we saw him again.

November 10th.

In the morning Samuelson and I arose and staggered on. Presently we came to a large hollow log in which rain-water had collected. Unable to get at the water with our mouths, we sucked it up with dried reeds that lay around. A little later we met

a native with a *bolo*. He received us with kindness, fed us, and let us sleep in his hut. Next day he took us to a nearby village, where we found the rest of our company, save big Karl. He, too, it appeared, had encountered natives, but while the others had thrown themselves down to sleep he, after a good meal, had started for a village ten miles down the coast where, we were told, an American lived. How he could undertake a long tramp after our terrible weeks in the boat, I shall never understand. Karl returned the next day with the American. We were taken in litters to his place, given medicines, and put to bed, where we sank into a stupor which lasted for days.

A couple of weeks later we were on board the revenue cutter *Pollillo* bound for Manila. Arriving there, we reported the suicide of Lieut. Holmes to the naval authorities, who held an inquiry, interrogating us about every detail of the trip. Here, for the first time, we learned the fate of the lifeboat that had pulled away from the *Dumaru* with only nine men. Like ourselves, it had drifted across to the Philippines, landing on the island of Masbate. It was adrift for twenty-five days, but, having only nine men aboard, the water and biscuit sufficed for all. The life-raft, with the captain and four men, was picked up eleven days after the ship foundered, all the men being in good condition. Several cruisers, it appeared, had searched for us, the *Brooklyn* having picked up my S.O.S. calls when about twelve hundred miles from Guam. Extraordinary to relate, the S.O.S. had not been received at Guam at all, the reason being that on the afternoon of the blowing-up of the *Dumaru* the operator on watch was doing arc work and not listening in for spark signals on commercial wave-lengths. It was to this fact that the whole tragedy was due.



"The great breaker caught the stern of the boat, flinging it end over end like a cork."

The KIDNAPPING OF by Kenneth

The mysterious abduction of Father Heslin, the unassuming parish priest of Colma, California; the man-hunt that followed, covering the entire State; the extraordinary "ransom letters"; the discovery of the priest's body and the hunting-down of the kidnapper—these are some of the details of one of the most remarkable chapters in the criminal annals of America. The prominent part played in the affair by the newspapers will come as a surprise to readers accustomed to see criminal investigations conducted on more orthodox lines.

At nine o'clock on the evening of August 2nd, 1921, a small dark man alighted from a Ford car and rapped imperatively at the modest parish house where lived Father Patrick Heslin, priest of the parish of Colma, California. In answer to his ring appeared the housekeeper, Marie Wendel, to whom the caller made a request to see Father Heslin. Just what conversation took place between the priest and the caller is not known, but Father Heslin at once went to the church next door, secured the necessary equipment for administering the last sacrament to the dying, and, telling the housekeeper that he had to leave on an urgent sick call, left with the stranger in the motor-car, headed south in the direction of Salada Beach.

The following morning the church bell failed to ring at its customary hour. The housekeeper hurried to the Father's room to call him, but there was no evidence that he had come back. All that day the worried woman waited for the priest's return, but when evening approached and he was still absent, she confided to Monsignor James Cantwell, a close friend of Heslin's, her fears for his safety. A search was at once instituted; Constable Landini of Colma was informed of the priest's strange disappearance, and he hurriedly organized a searching party, combing the district towards the beach, fearing that possibly the automobile had met with an accident and its occupants were injured. All doubts as to Father Heslin's fate, however, were presently set to rest by the receipt at the residence of Archbishop Edward J. Hanna, of San Francisco, of the following extraordinary letter:—

Aug. 3d.

Act with caution, for I have father of Colma in bootleg cellar, where a lighted candle is left burning when I leave. At bottom of candle are all the chemicals necessary to generate enough poison gas to kill a dozen men. As he is fastened with chains you will see that he is in a very bad way, I will leave him just where he is and in two hours from the time I leave him he will be dead.

Chief of Police O'Brien, of San Francisco.

FATHER HESLIN

F. Richards

The candle will not burn more than an hour and a half after I leave him, for I cut it that length. If the door is opened to this cellar by anyone except myself, it will ignite a bunch of matches, and upset a can of gasoline on top of him, and the entire police force and all your knights would not be able to get the chains off him before he would burn to death. SO THE BEST THING IS FOR YOU TO GET THE SIXTY-FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS IN FIVES, TENS, TWENTIES, FIFTIES AND HUNDREDS, BUT NONE HIGHER THAN HUNDREDS AND BE SURE THERE IS NO MARKS ON THEM FOR IF ANYTHING AROUSES MY SUSPICIONS I WILL HAVE HIM DIE RIGHT WHERE HE IS. I HAD CHARGE OF A MACHINE GUN IN THE ARGONNE AND POURED THOUSANDS OF BULLETS INTO STRUGGLING MEN AND KILLING IS NO NOVELTY TO ME BESIDES IT WILL BE YOUR OWN BUNCH THAT WILL KILL HIM IF YOU DO NOT DO JUST AS YOU ARE TOLD.

Get the sixty-five hundred dollars in unmarked bills in package and seal it, for the two men who will handle it before it gets to me think it is dope, so don't leave it unsealed or it might not reach me after you had sent it. Have car ready with spot-light, and you will get instructions which road to take and you will turn the spotlight upward and drive slowly until you see a white strip across the road. Then stop, get out with the money, leave car and follow the string that is attached to white strip until you come to end of the string. Then put down package and go back to town, and remember your brother does not get out until I have the money and am in the clear besides an . . . . (here came about eighteen words made indecipherable by being smeared with ink) . . . and he is complaining of the pain when he is not gagged so he cannot make a complaint. Better have a doctor ready with you, and be at the house where he lived, and wait for the instructions messenger with the instructions what road to take. REMEMBER! JUST ONE MAN IN THAT CAR, and he had better be careful, for if he looks suspicious he will be tagged with a hand grenade, as I have six of them ready for any treachery. And the waiting man will not be seen at all, and he will not see the man to whom he passes the package, and the second man gives it to me. But remember, if the cops are notified, or any move made that will make it dangerous for me, I will not send you the instructions how to find him and release him. Besides, if this becomes public it will be seen how easy it is to trap your bunch of imposters, and other will go and do likewise. "Nuff sed." "It's up to you." You will get the message about nine o'clock at night perhaps tonight, perhaps tomorrow night. (The following was printed with ink): Had to hit him four times and he is unconscious from pressure on brain, so better hurry and no fooling. To-night at 9 o'clock.

[*Drawn from a photograph.*

Father Patrick Heslin.

All the above with the exception of the last paragraph, was typewritten, the punctuation and phrasing being exactly as in the original.

The receipt of this letter, needless to say, created consternation; the statement about hitting the priest caused his friends to fear that he had been killed. Archbishop Hanna immediately turned the document over to Chief of Police O'Brien of San Francisco, and within a short time the entire police departments of the bay regions concentrated their efforts on locating the kidnapped priest. Posses were formed in the smaller towns south of San Francisco; aeroplanes were lent by State and Government; trained man-hunters were put on the trail; Boy Scouts were divided into searching parties, and, with hundreds of officers aiding there was instituted such a man-hunt as had probably never taken place before. As with a fine comb the searchers hunted the district for miles in every direction. Old abandoned shacks and cabins were scrutinized; barns, out-buildings, and all available hiding-places were investigated, but every effort was fruitless. For days the hunt continued, and the searchers became frantic in their efforts. The priests of the San Francisco diocese offered five thousand dollars reward; the citizens of Colma added a like amount, while the board of supervisors of San Mateo county added a thousand dollars, making a total of eleven thousand dollars for the discovery of Father Heslin, dead or alive.

Twenty thousand circulars were ordered to be prepared, containing a description of the missing priest, but these were never used, owing to events that occurred before their distribution.

Hand-writing and type-writing experts were consulted in an effort to trace the machine that had been used. It was decided to use a process of elimination and —though it would require a long time— track down every machine until the actual one was found. The make and model had already been identified from the type.

Late in the afternoon of August 10th, eight days after the priest's disappearance, an *Examiner* reporter waited in the ante-room of the Archbishop's residence. Another " ransom letter " had been received the day before, and public interest was at fever-heat. The second letter was later proved to have been concocted by the San Francisco *Bulletin*, an afternoon newspaper, and Nick Harris, the head of a private detective agency. The only other person in the plot was Captain of Detectives Matheson, and the idea was to endeavour to force the kidnapper into the open by causing him to believe that someone else had found the missing man's hiding-place. The letter —printed by hand— ran as follows :—

Arch Bishop Hanna

Don't be supprised to get this It is to tell you Father Heslin is not dead. Neither is he injured yet. Fate has made me do this. Sickness & mizery has compelled my action. I must have money, please forgive this act if you can.

Have $15,000 Cash ready.

You will hear from me *very soon*.

The manner in which this is to be paid will be revealed to you in my owne way very soon in fact now that the excitment is died down. Father Heslin is brave, & says for you help him. Have money ready for my future instructions you will hear from me *very soon*.

You will know I am the right person as I will have the pice of paper that fits on this letter.

(The lower right-hand corner of the sheet was torn off.)

The *Examiner* reporter waited patiently to interview the busy Archbishop, but meanwhile his interest was aroused by another individual who desired an audience. The journalistic instinct ever to the surface, he engaged the other man in conversation, and was astounded to learn that he had news of the missing priest. As a matter of fact, he had discovered the location of the body, for poor Father Heslin was dead !

Calling a taxi, the newspaper man hurried his informant to the office of his paper. Chief of Police O'Brien was hurriedly summoned, and when he arrived a tale was related that would have done credit to the most imaginative fiction writer.

William A. Hightower, the informant, stated that a few days before he had met one Dolly Mason, a girl he had known in Salt Lake City. She had read in the papers about the missing priest, and therefore attached great importance to the mutterings of a half-intoxicated man she had encountered the night before. This man, she told Hightower, was a foreigner—probably a Greek. Taking a pistol from his pocket, he exhibited it to her, and when she showed fright he remarked : " You do right to be afraid of this gun. It has taken human life ! " Dolly Mason then asked him where the dead man was buried, and the foreigner replied : " He isn't alone. I've a man watching him all the time—a man who sits and cooks flap-jacks." He also expressed deep hatred for the Catholic Church. Hightower further stated that he had been over the region near Colma recently, and remembered seeing a sign-board that pictured a man frying flap-jacks—the advertisement of a flour company.

On the previous Sunday, therefore, he drove out to the district and located the sign. He believed that the priest's body would be found somewhere near the sign, and, after an extensive search, he finally peered over the edge of a cliff that paralleled the beach. On a sandy ledge some distance down he saw a scarf, and clambering down, he was rewarded by the discovery of a revolver cartridge, while buried in the sand immediately under his feet he found a piece of blood-stained gunny-sacking. Deciding that was enough for one day, he returned to San Francisco and searched for Dolly Mason. Being unable to find her, he waited for three days and then made another trip to the beach. The spot was still undisturbed, and, on his return to the city, he went to the Archbishop's house to notify him of his discoveries.

Directly Hightower had related his story a party was organized to proceed to the spot described. Chief of Police O'Brien, of San Francisco ; City Editor William M. Hines, of the *Examiner ;* and Samuel Crow, George Lynn, and Ernest Hopkins of the newspaper staff, drove at breakneck speed to Colma. At Colma, Constable Landini was picked up ; and from this point Hightower directed the route.

Threading the twisting curves of the Pedro Valley road through a drizzling fog, the party reached Thornton Station and the " flap-jack " advertisement just about midnight. Here they left the car and, with Hightower in the lead, ploughed through quicksand and sand-dunes in a darkness that was lit only by the dim phosphorescence of the sea. The members of the party were by no means convinced that Hightower's statements were correct ; they fully expected a justifiable mistake or a hoax.

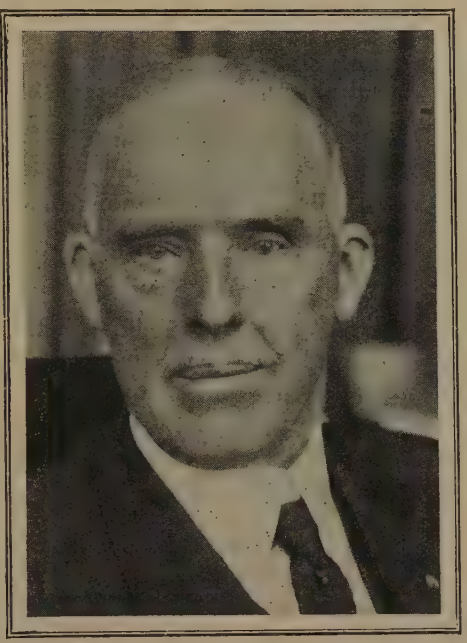
The boundaries of the little cliff-ledge he had described were marked from above with hummocks covered by vegetation, and Hightower was forced to peer over the cliff two or three times before he located the spot. At last he scrambled over the edge and disappeared into the blackness below.

" This is the place," he called up.

The others, leaping down, immediately picked up the scarf, where it still clung to

the base of the declivity. Shovels were passed down, and Lynn and Hightower commenced to dig, while lanterns held by the rest of the party cast ghostly shadows over the scene. The earth was very soft; in a few moments Lynn's shovel struck something. A few more careful scrapings brought to light a man's hand and a coat sleeve. The digging was then interrupted while several of the men went to a distant farmhouse for more lights. On their return the digging was completed, bringing to light the body of the unfortunate Father Heslin. Identification was easy, for papers, watch, money, and a pastor's railroad pass were found in the pockets.

The body was immediately removed to San Francisco, while Hightower was taken to police headquarters for examination. From the first his story was doubted, and slowly items of incriminating evidence came to light. In his room at a San Francisco hotel was found an infernal machine, or time-bomb; a garage keeper came forward who claimed to have hired a car to Hightower on the night of the priest's disappearance; and portions of a tent, similar to pieces found in the grave, were unearthed in a place where he had stored them. The baffling thing was the motive for the crime. Surely he did not expect a poor priest to be worth such a ransom as was demanded?



Captain of Detectives Matheson.

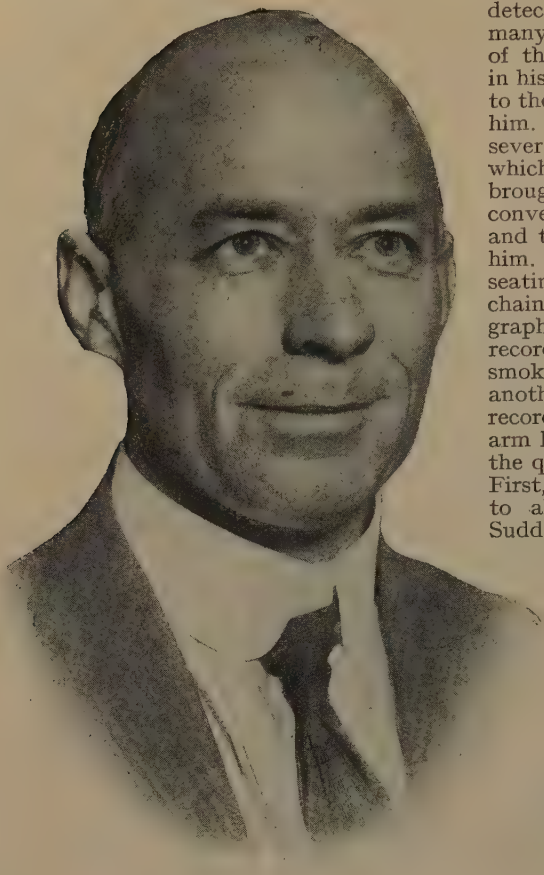
Practical proof that Hightower was the writer of the first "ransom letter" was furnished by handwriting experts. *Examiner* reporters had again gone to the grave, and, three feet under where the body was found, they discovered portions of a tent with the word "Tubercolosis" painted on the sides. The spelling and formation of the letters were the same as Hightower's. It appeared that he had erected the tent on the cliff-ledge by the sea and had painted the legend to warn people from approaching too close. Here he had held the unfortunate priest captive, and, finally, for some unknown reason, had killed him, burying the tent first and his victim above it. Tent-pegs and a flooring that fitted the tent were found stored away in a garage.

The police now directed their energies to finding the mythical "Dolly Mason," but instead they stumbled on the trail of one Doris Shirley, who had lived in a San Francisco hotel with Hightower as his wife. She was in Fresno, California, when she read of the police hunt for her, but at once came back. Her return was followed by a dramatic shattering of the alibi Hightower had set up. According to his statement, he had rented a car from a garage at four o'clock on the afternoon of the day the priest disappeared. He had then motored to San Jose with Doris Shirley and returned at 11 p.m., leaving the car outside the garage. The owner of the garage, however, stated that the car was hired at six o'clock and not returned until 1 a.m. the following day. All Hightower's hopes in regard to an alibi were squashed when Doris Shirley proved that she had gone riding with Hightower only until seven o'clock; that she had then gone to a vaudeville show, and afterwards to a restaurant, returning to her rooms about eleven o'clock at night. Her statements as to her movements were verified, and Hightower was held for trial.

As the date of his trial approached interest grew intense; despite the almost complete web of circumstantial evidence with which he was surrounded, there were many who championed the man who was fighting a lone fight against such tremendous odds.

During the time he awaited trial in jail, another interesting event took place: the "lie detector," technically known as the sphygmomanometer, was used on the accused man. This apparatus, which records heart throbs, was called upon to determine the truth or falsity of Hightower's statements.

The test was arranged by an afternoon newspaper, the San Francisco *Call*, and was carried out under the orders of Police Chief August Vollmer, of Berkeley, California, and District Attorney Swart, of San Mateo County. The actual test was conducted by Dr. J. A. Larson, of the Berkeley police department, who used his own method, which is the combination of three instruments

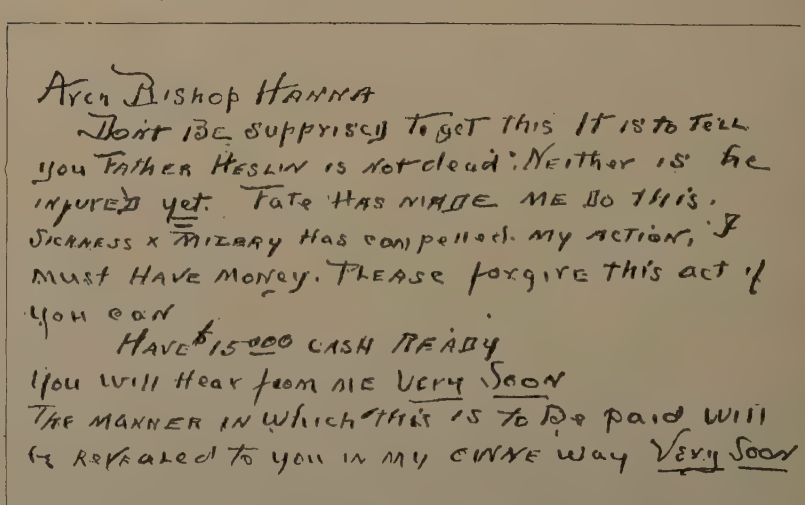


William A. Hightower.

detectors" have occasionally been used, many courts refuse to accept the evidence of the machine. Hightower was awakened in his cell a little after midnight and brought to the room where the investigators awaited him. He had previously been told that several scientists desired to experiment, to which he gave a willing assent. Before being brought into the room he was engaged in conversation in order to settle his nerves, and then led to where the machine awaited him. He gave it a curious glance and, seating himself, awaited results. First a chain to which was attached the pneumograph, was fastened around his chest; this recorded breathing pressure on a sheet of smoked paper unwinding from one drum to another. The sphygmomanometer, which records blood pressure, was next fitted to his arm like a cuff, just below the elbow. Then the questioning began, lasting over an hour. First, simple questions were asked, designed to allow him time to compose himself. Suddenly the question: "Did you murder Father Heslin?" was shot at him by the District Attorney. Outwardly composed and unruffled he answered: "No," but the variation on the smoked paper refuted his statement. A number of questions dealing with the case were asked him and, after the session was over, all concerned unhesitatingly announced their belief in his guilt, basing their findings on the inky record left on the smoked sheet of paper.

Though penniless, Hightower was not forced to call upon the court to appoint counsel for his defence; several leading attorneys offered free aid, while a number of people,

—the Erlanger sphygmomanometer, the "Tycos," and the pneumograph. Attorney Wm. A. Marston, of Boston, a criminologist of wide reputation, uses the Tycos alone to determine whether a suspect is telling the truth. This was the first time the instrument had been employed in a case of any magnitude; though "lie



Arch Bishop Hanna
Dont be suppriscd to get this It is to tell you Father Heslin is not dead: Neither is he injured yet. Fate has made me do this. Sickness & Misery has compelled my action, I must have Money. Please forgive this act if you can
Have $15000 cash ready
You will Hear from me very Soon
The manner in which this is to be paid will be revealed to you in my own way Very Soon

A facsimile of the "fake" ransom letter

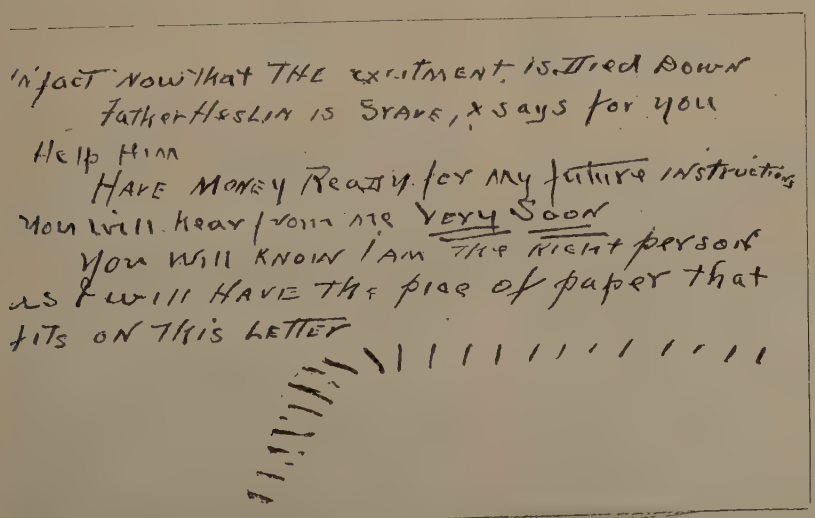
having faith in his innocence, volunteered to stand the expense.

Throughout the long weary trial Hightower never once lost his composure, but the shattering of his alibi, the tremendous array of evidence piled against him, coupled with his own tangled admissions while on the witness-stand, proved fatal to his case, and the jury finally found him guilty of the murder of the priest. Many people who attended the trial came away with the firm belief that Hightower practically gave up the fight after Doris Shirley turned against him; he acted as if he was shielding someone and cared little for the outcome as far as he himself was concerned.

After having been found guilty and sentenced to San Quentin prison for life, Hightower made the following statement to the reporters: "Everything I have to say can be summed up in two words—Not Guilty. I know several things that would have helped me if I had cared to tell them, but those things involved others, and will never be told. The public has been misled; the officers of the law and the jury were misled. As far as William A. Hightower is concerned it makes little difference — very little indeed. But it is a funny thing to reflect that our whole civilization is dominated by lies!"

The man was a complete enigma to all who studied him, and an enigma he will probably remain; one of those strange characters who fascinate the psychologist and the criminologist. The ordinary reader, however, will ask himself only two questions concerning Hightower—what was the motive for his crime, and why did he deliberately attract attention and suspicion to himself by his trumped-up story of the mythical girl and the equally imaginary Greek?

Doris Shirley.



In fact now that the excitment is Died Down
Father Heslin is Safe, I says for you
Help Him
Have Money Ready for my future instructions
You will hear from me very Soon
You will know I am the right person
as I will have the piece of paper that
fits on this letter

that led to Hightower's detection.

The CROSS-EYED ENGLISHMAN

by Louis A. Sabine

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY L. WOOD

A rousing story of the early days in the Canadian North-West. "The narrative is true in all essentials except names," writes Mr. Sabine, "and I myself played a small part in the affair. The incidents related occurred about a hundred and fifty miles north and west of Winnipeg, near Lake Winnipegosis."

IT was easy to see that he was a tenderfoot by the way he opened the door, and the way he sidled in showed that he was not very certain of the reception he might receive, and perhaps not too sure of himself either. Edging up to the makeshift bar, he proclaimed to those nearest to him that he wanted a drink. And incidentally, to anybody who had ears, that he was an Englishman.

"Old Man" Johnson, who was an inoffensive old fellow, was looking after the bar himself that evening, for the simple reason that "Bad Bill" Judson, who was really a bad man, had thrown Chinny Chambres, his barkeep, out of the place earlier in the day for some fancied affront.

"What's that?" bawled Johnson, pausing before the tenderfoot.

"Could I have a whisky and soda?" asked the Englishman.

"Well, we've got the liquor all right," replied Johnson, setting out a bottle and a tin cup, "but I reckon you'll have to go to Winnipeg or some other place for the rest of it."

The Englishman made no reply, but poured out his drink. Then, putting down the price called for on the plank that did duty as a bar, he picked up his cup. Looking round the room he apparently caught sight of the empty chair at my table and headed in my direction.

I saw then that he was a fairly tall man, even among the fellows in that little shack, and I doubt if there were more than three there who stood less than six feet. I should have judged him to be about five foot eleven, but it was rather hard to guess on account of the way he slouched his shoulders. I found out later that he stood a trifle over six foot two.

The stranger was dressed in a nondescript suit of grey tweed, with a brilliant red and green "mackinaw" over the lot. He wore high-top elk boots, rather an oddity for that time and date. His cap was some sort of fur—muskrat, I should judge—but it was too badly worn to be certain. I noticed, when he got closer, that he had the square chin and prominent nose of the fighting man, in spite of his high pitched voice.

What struck me most, however, was his eyes. Crossed eyes I've seen before and since, but never another pair as badly crossed as those; the pupils were half hidden by the inner corners of his eyelids.

"Blooming rough-looking lot," he murmured to me, by way of opening a conversation, after choking himself with his whisky.

"Oh, I don't know," I said, smiling. "You're new here. How long have you been in the country?"

"Arrived in Winnipeg last week," he answered. "Been walking ever since, looking for a job."

"Looking for a job, eh?" I said. "Ever ride any?"

"A little in the Old Country," he replied.

"Well, I might get you on with old man Hembree," I told him. "That's if you think you can chase cows," I added, as an afterthought. "I'm working for him myself this winter. Rather a hot-headed old scout, but a mighty good boss for all that. I've been with him off and on now for about three years."

"I certainly should be glad of a job, if you think he'd take me on," said the stranger. "But I doubt it," he went on, somewhat bitterly. "I'm only a green Englishman, you know. That's what they all call me. I think I've asked forty different men between here and Portage for a job of any kind. And all the answer I've got so far is 'Nothing doing. If you were experienced, I might be able to use you, but the

last green Englishman I had wasn't worth much.' That's the way it's been all along."

"Well, partner," I told him, "you've got yourself a job now, I think. It may be anything from hauling feed or manure to chopping wood, but if you really want work just be at the Bates House to-morrow morning at eight o'clock. By the way, what's your name?" I added.

"William Martin, of London, England," he said.

"Glad to know you, Bill," I went on thrusting out my hand. "Mine's John Fletcher, commonly called Jack by my friends—and I think you're going to be one of them." He had a straightforward manner about him that I liked.

"Glad to know you, Mr. Fletcher," he replied, giving my hand the hearty grip that I've always found real men to possess.

"Now remember," I said, as I rose to go, "Bates House to-morrow morning, eight o'clock. And my name's Jack — plain Jack."

With that I left the saloon, and with the snow screaming a protest underfoot at every step, headed for the livery stable to take a last look at my pony. Finding everything there to my liking, I went to the hotel, and getting the key of my room from old Bates, turned in for a much-needed sleep. I'd ridden over sixty-eight miles that day, the latter half of it with a blizzard in my teeth and the mercury standing at thirty-eight "below."

The next morning on coming down to breakfast, I found the Englishman hugging the box-stove in one corner of the dining-room. Outside the snow-devils were howling out of the north on the wings of a sixty-mile gale.

"Well, Bill," I greeted him. "I guess we won't get very far on our way to-day. By the look of the weather, we're here for anything from three days to a week."

"If you think it's going to last as long as that," he answered, dolefully, "I guess I'm out of luck again, for I've only got two bob left since settling up with Bates this morning."

"Never you mind about that," I told him. "I thought I hired you for Hembree last night? You haven't quit, have you?"

"Not by a jugful," he returned.

"Well, you let me do the worrying about this blizzard and the finances as well," I said. Then I raised my voice. "Bates!" I shouted, and the old man came shuffling in from the kitchen.

"I'm getting mighty hungry, Bates," I told him. "Bill here is working for old man Hembree, over east of the ridge, and he'll eat and bunk with me while this storm holds out. Now get a move on those pins of yours and let's have some grub."

After breakfast we sat round the stove awhile, trying to keep a desultory conversation going. Failing in that, I suggested that we should trot over to the saloon and see if there was anything doing there.

"And we might as well stop at Servanties as we pass by and get you a pair of moccasins," I added.

"Oh, these boots'll do me all right," Bill answered. "They're almost new."

"Now don't get offended," I retorted, "but you're sure green to this country. Why, man, you'd freeze your feet stiff before we got three miles out of this town! This isn't England, you want to remember, and a fifty-mile drive isn't to be sneezed at this time of the year. And a fifty-mile drive isn't all you're going to have, either," I added. "If I know anything about this Canadian North-West the mercury is going to be around 'fifty below' when this wind drops."

"Well, all right—just as you say," he answered. "You're the boss. I'll pay for them just as soon as I get the money."

After buying the moccasins and a few things that Mrs. Hembree had commissioned me to buy for her, we went on to the saloon by way of the livery stable, where we stopped long enough for me to make arrangements for a cutter and single harness for my pony to make the trip back to the ranch.

Reaching the saloon we found a dozen or so men holding down various boxes and chairs round the big box-stove, drinking, smoking, and telling yarns about blizzards they'd been through.

Pulling a bench up to the stove, slightly to the rear of the others, we sat down facing the door. We'd just got comfortably settled and had ordered our drinks when the door was thrown violently open and in stalked "Bad Bill" Judson. With a curse on the weather, he walked over to the stove. Pulling off his mitts, he stood warming his hands for a minute and looking over the crowd.

He was a big man, the biggest there. He stood about six foot four, and weighed around two hundred and thirty pounds. He had jet-black hair, bushy eyebrows, piercing grey eyes, and a short black beard with a reddish tinge in it. His clothes were the same as everybody else's—mackinaw jacket and trousers, with the tops thrust into high Arctic socks, moccasins, and a skin cap.

Apparently picking out the seat that he wanted, Judson swaggered over to a little French half-breed who was sitting next to me. Jerking him up by the slack of his "mackinaw," Bill calmly appropriated his chair. "Little man," he said, "when I want anything, I just take it. See?"

Turning to me, he continued. "Hullo, Jack! What brings you so far from the charming presence of Miss Hembree?"

"The job of attending strictly to my own business," I retorted.

"Well, Jack," he replied with a grin.

"If you feel that way about it, I'll attend to my own, too. But," he added, his tone changing, "you and old man Hembree want to do the same. If you two know what's healthy for you, you'll keep off my trail. Just clamp down on that, Fletcher, and tell old man Hembree that I mean it for him as well."

Then, picking up his chair, he moved it across to a table on the opposite side of the stove, saying to the two men sitting there: "Well, boys, how about a little game of draw?" On their nodding agreement he called for a deck of cards and a bottle of "Mountain Dew."

Heaving a sigh of relief at his departure, I turned to Martin. "I am sure glad to get rid of that guy," I said. "He gets my goat."

"He doesn't seem to have much love for you and Mr. Hembree, does he?" observed Bill. "Who is he, anyway?"

"That's Bill Judson," I told him. "They call him 'Bad Bill,' and I reckon he's just about as bad as they say he is, if what I hear is all true. Personally, I think he's just a yellow coyote."

"What is the trouble between Mr. Hembree, you, and Judson, if I may ask?" said Martin. "Of course, I know it's none of my business."

"Well," I answered, "I don't know about that. As you are now one of the outfit perhaps you ought to know. You see, a few years ago, 'Bad Bill' and his brother moved up here. Where they came from nobody seems to know, but they appeared to have money. Bill and his brother put up a little butcher-shop and grocery store, and they rented a small barn for a slaughter-house just behind this place. Well, to make a long story short, people began to notice that the two Judsons never bought any beeves from round here. The few they got were always brought in at night, apparently from a distance, and slaughtered before morning.

"Presently reports drifted in from neighbouring ranches that they were losing a few prime cattle now and again. It wasn't much, but a beast every week soon mounts up. When we commenced to figure up among ourselves, we discovered that an animal a week was just about what the Judsons' business amounted to. Two and two always make four as a rule, so one evening we called on the Judsons and asked to see some of the hides from the cattle they'd killed.

"We should have done better, I guess, if, instead of going to the shop, we had gone to their slaughter-house first. But anyway, like fools, we tackled the shop. While we stood round listening to Sam swearing at us for suspecting them of being cattle-thieves, Bill sneaked out and set fire to the slaughter-house.

"But we had one piece of luck. Old man Hembree and I, getting tired of Sam's talk, stepped outside just in time to see Bill Judson emerge from the slaughter-house. When he opened the door to come out we saw that the inside of the building was apparently one mass of fire.

"We both realized at once that it was too late to get at the hides, and we came to the conclusion that Bill had deliberately set the building on fire to destroy the evidence. Keeping out of sight we watched to see what he would do next. Approaching the back of the store he crawled in through a window. Hembree and I hurried round to the front of the building and went in through the front door just in time to hear Bill say: 'Come on, Sam, show these fellows the hides and let us finish with this talk.'

"Of course, when we got outside and started for the barn we found the whole place ablaze. The barn and all it contained went up in smoke, and with it, I believe, proof positive that Bill and his brother had been selling stolen beef to the people round here.

"Anyway, Hembree's evidence and mine fixed the barn-burning on to Bill, and got him three years at Stoney. As Bill is married, however, and has a wife and three kids, we all got soft-hearted—and soft-headed, too, I guess—and so we signed a petition and got him out about six months ago.

"Instead of it being a lesson to him, he's getting worse and worse all the time, and I wish we'd let him serve his full time and then run him clean out of the country."

"Why don't you get together now and run him out?" asked Martin.

"Well, it's like this," I replied. "We would, but, as I said, Bill has a family, and I must say he looks after them. As long as he does that and we have no direct proof that he's cattle-rustling, we can't do much without hurting his wife and kids more than him."

At noon, as the storm was as bad as ever, all the fellows, except two or three who were married and lived near by, got the saloon keeper to set up an impromptu lunch, which we ate standing at the bar or at our various seats.

Judson, I noticed, was drinking steadily, his mood getting more and more ugly as the day passed. I remarked on it to my companion and suggested that we should beat it. Martin was a stranger and, furthermore, an Englishman, I pointed out, and sooner or later Judson would inevitably pick a quarrel with him.

"Well, I'm not running from him," Martin retorted, with a glint in his eyes and a slight squaring of his chin that it warmed my heart to see.

Getting up, to my surprise, he deliberately walked over to the table where Judson was sitting with the other gamblers. Pulling out a chair he sat down facing him.

"How about joining in?" he said, casually. "No objections, I suppose?"

Judson looked up with a scowl. "Think you know anything about draw?" he asked sneeringly.

"Oh, not very much," replied the Englishman, "but I'm willing to learn."

"Deal him in," said Judson to the man who was dealing at the time. "We'll see the colour of his coin—that's if a cross-eyed mongrel like him has any."

"You will either take back what you just said or you are going to get the thrashing of your life."

The Englishman's face turned first scarlet then dead white. Gripping the table-top with both hands, he rose slowly to his feet. You could have heard a pin drop, everything was so quiet. Judson had spoken rather loudly and everybody in the room had heard him. All of us were waiting in tense expectancy, wondering what answer the Englishman would make.

The little French half-breed, whom Judson had taken the chair from earlier in the day, whispered excitedly in my ear, "Meestaire Fletchaire, Judson weel keel him!"

"Not if I know it," I replied, reassuringly, but I felt none too certain myself as to what would happen.

Quietly Martin pushed back his chair. "Judson," he said, "you are a dirty yellow cur. You know it, I know it, everybody in this room knows it. You are just a bully who has never met a man big enough to stand up to you. You will either take back what you just said or you are going to get the thrashing of your life."

Judson came to his feet with a snap, cursing horribly. "I don't let any —— English —— talk to me like that!" he roared, and he tore off his "mackinaw" and flung it into a corner.

Springing to my feet, I ran round the stove.

"Hang it, man, you must be crazy!" I cried, grabbing the Englishman by the arm.

"Not a bit," he retorted. "He needs what he's going to get, and I'll jolly well see he gets it!"

With that he pushed the table to one side, kicking his chair after it. While everybody rushed to clear the rest of the floor, Martin calmly handed me his coat and cap.

Meanwhile Judson had stripped to his undershirt, and as I stepped back he rushed in with his arms going like flails, and cursing furiously, describing what he was going to do to any Englishman who talked back to him.

Martin was standing lightly on the balls of his feet, his arms hanging loose at his sides. How he did it I don't know, but just as Judson was apparently right on top

of him he jumped swiftly to one side and as Judson rushed past, carried on by his own momentum, the Englishman's foot shot out, tripping him neatly.

With a crash Judson fell, striking his head against the hearth of the stove and cutting a gash half-way across his forehead. The force with which he struck would have stunned an ordinary man—but not Judson. Leaping to his feet he whirled round upon the Englishman, wiping the blood out of his eyes with the back of his hand.

He had now learnt caution, and that made him much more dangerous. Circling slowly round, he waited until he saw an opening. Then he rushed in with a perfect fusillade of sledge-hammer blows, any one of which would have felled an ox had they landed.

But Martin's guard was almost perfect, and time after time he shook Judson with blows to the head and body, though he never got a chance for a knock-out. Judson was fighting entirely for the body, and with his bulldog strength and weight only one ending seemed possible—the eventual defeat of the Englishman.

Judson forced Martin back until he was almost against the wall, with a small box between him and it. Then, with a bellow, Judson closed in. The Englishman tried to spring clear, but tripped over the box and fell. As he went down he struck the back of his head against the log wall behind him with terrific force, knocking him unconscious.

Judson did just what I expected. He sprang upon Martin, grabbed him by the throat and deliberately commenced to choke him to death.

Jumping to his side I laid my hand on my gun. "Judson, let go," I cried, "or I'll kill you!"

Slowly he rose to his feet and stood looking at me. If ever murder blazed out of a man's eyes I saw it in Judson's that day. Never taking my eyes off him for a moment, I motioned to one of the others to see to the unconscious Englishman.

At last Judson spoke. "Fletcher," he said, huskily, "I'll kill you some day; you butt in too much."

"Why not now?" I asked sarcastically. I was literally trembling with anger, and it was fortunate for all concerned that he said no more. Turning away from me he walked to the rear of the room, where there was a wash-bench, and commenced to wash the blood from his face.

Going over to see how Martin was faring, I found him, to my surprise, getting to his feet and looking for Judson.

"I think you've seen as much of Judson as is good for you," I told him.

"Not by a long sight," he retorted. "That box tripped me."

"So you want some more, do you?" roared Judson, pushing back through the crowd.

"Yes, I do," cried the Englishman, and he struggled to break away from the men who were holding him.

"Let him go if he wants to," I told them, and quick as lightning the Englishman jumped at his man. There was a quick interchange of blows; then Martin landed with his right clean on the point of Judson's jaw, and the big fellow went down and out like a felled ox.

With a sudden sickly smile on his face Martin turned towards the crowd. "I thought I could do it!" he said, shakily. "Got a drink anybody?" Then he collapsed, dead to the world.

A little water sprinkled on his face soon brought him round, and then pandemonium broke loose. Chinny Chambres, the barkeep, who had suffered himself at Judson's hands, climbed on the top of the bar, and yelling like a Comanche, called everybody up to have "one on the house."

Meanwhile old Johnson poured out a generous quantity of his best liquor, and handing it to the puzzled Englishman, said: "Gentlemen, let me introduce you all to the best scrapper in the North-West. Here's 'How' to 'Wild Bill,' the one and only!"

Everybody then crowded round offering drinks and congratulations, until Martin got as red in the face as a turkey.

"Let's get out of here," he said to me, quietly. "I feel mighty shaky in the knees."

As we started for the door we had to pass close to Judson, who was now sitting up. When he got level with him, Martin stopped, and holding out his hand, said: "No hard feelings, I hope?"

Judson scowled up into his face for a moment. Then, in a cold, deadly voice, he answered: "The next time I see you will be through smoke."

"No, you don't, Judson," I broke in. "There are plenty of people round here who would look into that, and in a fashion you wouldn't like either."

"You go to blazes!" he snarled, and a moment later we stepped through the doorway.

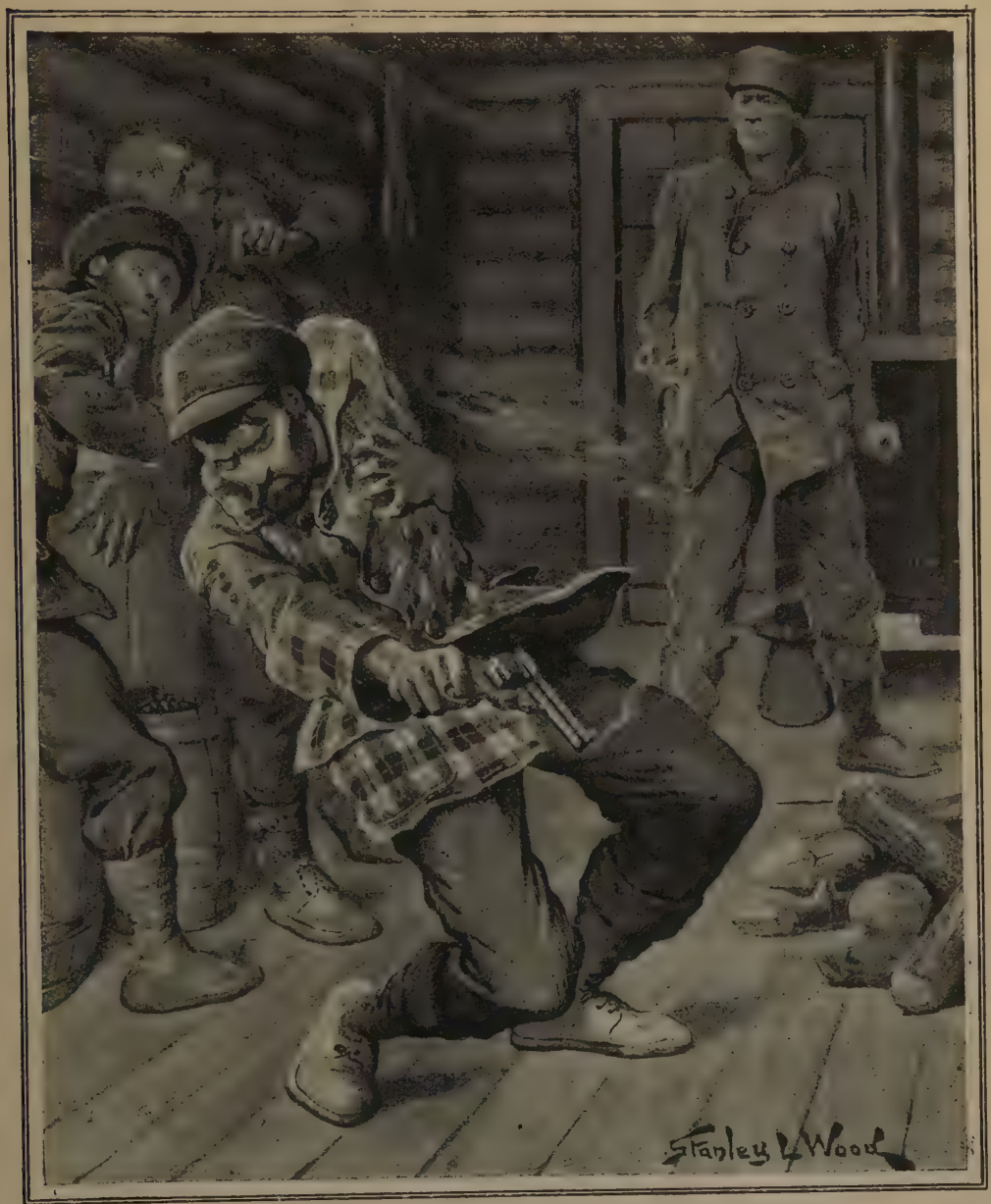
"What does he mean by 'seeing me through smoke'?" inquired Martin, and I explained that Judson meant he was going to shoot him on sight. "But I hardly think he'll carry things as far as that," I added.

"You're not quite sure that he won't, are you?" asked the Englishman, and I was compelled to say I wasn't.

"Well, when in Rome do as the Romans do," said Martin, rather grimly, and we passed on.

I made inquiries about Judson next morning, but he had apparently left town. So, when the storm broke, two days later, I'd almost forgotten about his threat.

The sun was just up when Bill and I drove out of the livery stable. The mercury had fulfilled my prophecy and was hovering somewhere round fifty below zero, while the snow lay over the plains as far as the



"I wheeled round just in time to see Bill Judson sagging to his knees."

eye could see in a scintillating blanket. Just at the edge of the town there was a little hardware store, and as we approached it I told Martin we would stop there for a moment to get some horseshoe nails. I also told him that the place was run by one of our oldest settlers, Jack Byron by name.

Driving up to the tie-rack I tied the pony up while Martin threw the blanket over it. We both went in, the Englishman walking through to the stove while I stopped nearer the front, where Byron kept a row of nail kegs under the edge of the counter.

Byron wasn't in at that moment, but he came in the next second through a door leading from the rear, carrying an armful of wood. With a cheery "Hello, Jack," he filled the stove, and then, coming forward, asked what I wanted.

As he stooped over the keg I indicated, somebody brushed past us. I thought it was Martin, and paid no attention.

A second later I was brought up with a jerk as a muffled report rang out from the back of the building. The next moment I was literally blinded and half-deafened by the flash and roar of a pistol-shot right in my ear.

I wheeled round just in time to see Bill Judson sagging to his knees. He held a smoking pistol in his right hand, while his left was clutching at his breast. Martin stood by the stove with a surprised look on his face and one hand in his "mackinaw" coat pocket, one corner of which was sending up a little spiral of blue smoke that told its own tale.

Paying no heed to Judson, I rushed to my friend's side. "Did he hit you?" I cried excitedly.

All the answer I got was "Good heavens! Have I killed him?"

Just then Byron called from where Judson had fallen. "Hey! Don't stand there like mummies," he shouted. "Give me a hand to get Judson on to a bed. And one of you shake it up to the doc's. I don't think he's hit bad."

At that Martin seemed to wake up. "Jack, you get the doctor," he said. "I'll help Byron get him to bed."

Running out, I untied the pony and, jumping into the cutter, headed for Doc Stuart's, about a mile on the other side of the town. I found the doctor in and we were on our way back inside ten minutes.

They had carried Judson into the lean-to at the back of the store that Byron used for his living-quarters and put him in Byron's bunk. The news had apparently spread pretty well over the town, for we found about a dozen men round the stove in the store when the doctor and I hurried through to the rear.

Byron met us at the door of his room. "I had to chase that bunch of guys out with a club," he said, indicating the crowd by the stove.

"That's right," said the doctor. "You and Fletcher go on out," he continued turning to Martin. "Byron, you stay here and give me a hand, will you?"

The Englishman and I joined the men round the stove, and immediately became the target of a thousand questions, which we refused to answer. What surprised them most was that this green Englishman had downed "Bad Bill" Judson in a stand-up gun-fight, for outside two or three champions Judson was reputed to be the best "short-gun man" in the district.

Presently Byron came out and told Martin and me that Judson wanted to see us. "Is he going to die, do you think?" I asked.

"Doc says not," he replied. "Hit too high. Bullet just nicked the top side of the right lung, and went clean through."

The Englishman heaved a sigh of relief. "I'm glad to hear that," he said.

We found Judson propped up on Byron's bed, breathing rather fast, but otherwise seemingly not much the worse for his wound.

"I'm sorry, old top," said Martin, sitting down on a box that Byron pushed up to the bedside.

Judson looked at him for a second with surprise writ large on his face. "What in Hades are you sorry about?" he burst out. "You got me, and I missed you. You didn't want me to plug you, did you?"

"Hardly," said Martin, with an uneasy grin. "But I'm really sorry that we've had all this trouble."

"Well, I reckon I'm the one that should be sorry," answered Judson. "I got just what was coming to me. I've never wanted to kill a man before, but I sure did this time. What I really meant to say was this: If the police come here to look into the shooting, tell them I said that I was the only one to blame. If the snow-glare hadn't blinded me a bit when I came across the road I guess English here wouldn't have had time to be sorry. Now git somebody to cart me home before some fool tells the missus that I'm killed, will you? So long, Fletcher; so long, English. Good luck!"

As it was now too late to start for the ranch, Martin and I headed back for the hotel, and on the way my companion told me how it happened that he "got" Judson first.

He had walked over to the stove, and, after warming his hands, turned his back to it. He was now facing the door and the two front windows. Just as he turned he saw a man run across the road, and though he had not seen his face the thought struck him that it was Judson.

So, when "Bad Bill" opened the front door and slid in, Martin had his hand in his coat pocket grasping his bulldog revolver, all ready for him. Coming in from the glare Judson was unable to see for a minute, while Martin's eyes were already accustomed to the dim light of the store's interior. Seeing that Judson had a gun in his hand, Martin didn't try to draw, but just fired through his pocket as Judson pulled trigger. By sheer chance, he made a lucky hit.

"Well," I said, when he'd finished, "I'm mighty glad you did, but when I think that old man Byron and I were within five feet of your target it gives me a prickly sensation up my back."

Next day we drove out to the ranch without further adventure. Martin was duly taken on, and in time made a fair ranch hand, but he would never carry a gun again. When, sometimes, we joked about it, he would say: "Well, I might use it again, and perhaps hit the wrong target and get hung for it. You can't always depend on luck, you know."

The last I heard of him was that, once in a while, he would plead with the boys to put on the gloves with him to keep him in practice, but he never found any partners.

This unique photograph shows a rhinoceros—"the picture of rage incarnate"—charging the Major's camera.

AFTER BIG GAME WITH A CAMERA

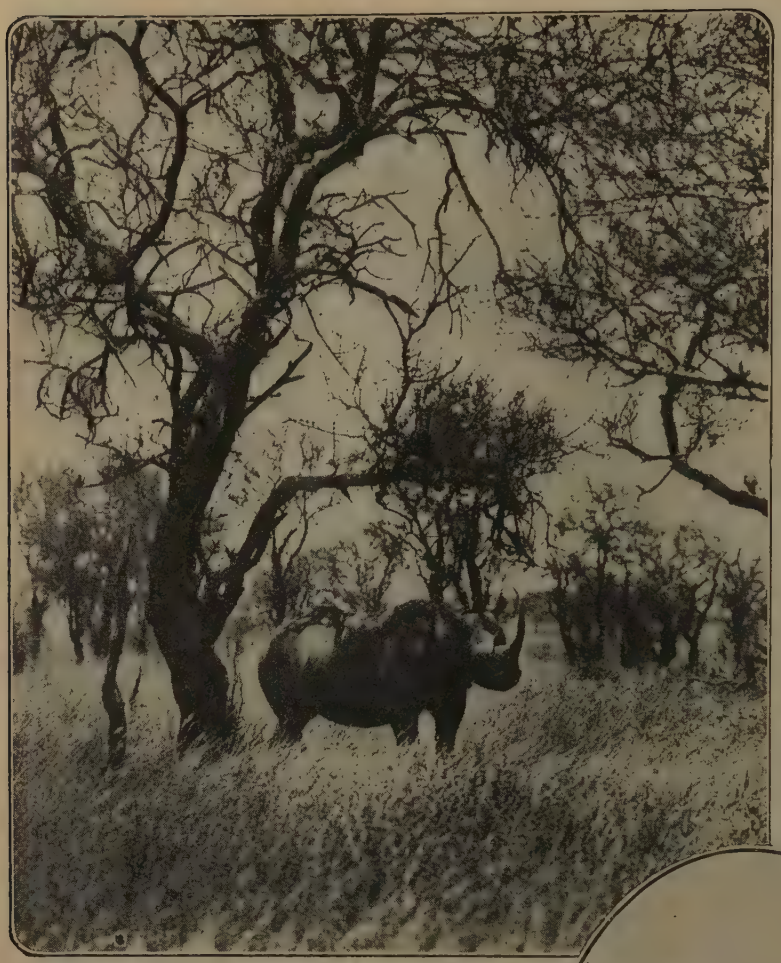
Told by Major A. Radclyffe Dugmore F.R.G.S.

and Set Down by Reginald Pound

Major Dugmore is a hunter of a new type, using the camera instead of the rifle and photographing instead of destroying. That he has found his life's hobby exciting will be abundantly evident from the stories here related; that the results achieved are well worth the risks entailed is proved by the wonderful pictures that accompany the narrative.

DURING an almost life-long experience of big-game hunting, chiefly in Africa, the number of occasions on which I have resorted to the rifle in the pursuit of my quarry can almost be counted on the fingers of my two hands.

Foolish and fanatical as some people doubtless imagine me to be, I freely confess that I have never been able to reconcile myself to the shooting of more or less defenceless creatures, whether antelope or giraffe, buffalo or lion. However aggressive an animal may be—and it is my experience that few show this characteristic unless they are molested—I have for a long time argued that big game hunting, at any rate as it is prosecuted in these days of high-powered motor-cars, telescopic sights, and rapid-firing weapons, is at its best a one-sided and unsatisfying form of sport, hardly worthy of the name.



Another "close-up" of a rhino.

The upshot of this long-cherished conviction of mine is that for many years I have made the camera my chief weapon, and often my only one, on my journeys in search of the bigger and more formidable mammals. Of trophies in the shape of heads, horns, skins, and so on, I have comparatively few, although had I wished I could have had enough to stock a museum.

Instead, I am the proud possessor of what I believe to be an absolutely unique collection of photographs and films of animals and birds in their natural haunts—a regular photographic zoo, in fact, to which naturalists and others may possibly be glad to turn in the years to come when some of the species portrayed have been wiped out.

My trips in search of big game pictures have, as already stated, been spread over many years, and with several of them I have dealt in my books. In this article, however, I propose to describe some outstanding experiences, including those that befell me in the series of trips from which I have recently returned.

Altogether I have travelled close on eight thousand miles in different parts of British East Africa, my headquarters being Nairobi, the administrative centre of the colony. In some instances I made part of the journey into the game country by motor-car; in others, in company with from forty to a hundred bearers, I covered the distance on foot, marching some hundreds of miles in the glaring sun, over the great sandy wastes, fertile plains, and wooded hill country that lie around Mount Kenia and—farther afield—the mighty, snow-capped Kilima-Njaro.

One of the first big game photographs I

A giraffe against the skyline.

ever tried to obtain was of a rhinoceros. The first member of the species to come my way appeared within a short distance of our camp, walking in an ungainly fashion under some trees and paying not the slightest heed to us. I hastily made preparations for photographing it, but before I was ready the huge beast had lumbered into the bush and out of sight.

The next day, after marching twelve miles, I came on a brace of rhinoceroses asleep under a thorn bush. By dint of careful stalking I got within eighty yards, when the two animals, a cow and a well-grown calf, suddenly got up and, hearing the sound of my shutter, turned and made straight for me. Being desirous of getting a closer picture, I stopped to change my plate, by which time the distance between the beasts and myself had decreased to fifteen yards.

A flashlight picture of a lioness.

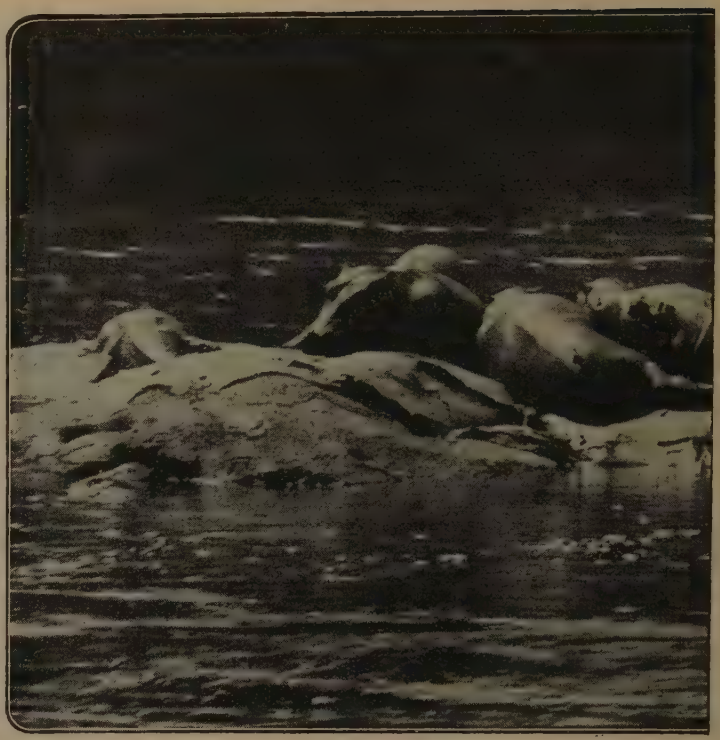
Hartebeest drinking at a water-hole.

Shouting to my companion, I withdrew the slide from the plateholder and, a second later, turned and fled, leaving my friend to warn the animals off by a shot not meant to kill.

Hardly had I recovered my breath than there rose from the landscape ahead of me no fewer than eight more rhinoceroses!

This was a bigger number than even I, a confirmed optimist, had bargained for, and the prospect of being surrounded by what looked like a small army of "rhinos" was so unalluring that I took advantage of a gap in the ranks and bolted precipitately for camp.

The following morning I went out again on a similar quest, my efforts being rewarded not only with some excellent pictures, but with a number of thrills that more than compensated for my ill-luck of the previous day. My companion noticed two rhinoceroses feeding half a mile from camp, one being the possessor of a very fine horn. Promptly I gathered together some photographic kit and, working in such a way as to get the wind in a favourable quarter, made my way towards my quarry.



Hippos asleep in a river. Notice the

I had gone perhaps a hundred yards when I had what must always count as one of the big surprises of my life. The country hereabouts consisted of tall grass, intermingled with many thorn bushes. Suddenly I was brought to a full-stop by a terrific snort—"*Wough!*" Anyone who has once heard that sound is not likely to forget it in a hurry; it can only be described as a sort of super-snort, followed by a series of equally alarming grunts. Swinging round I was amazed to see a rhino lumbering up behind me, though how on earth it had got there without being spotted I was at a complete loss to understand. However, there was not much time for speculation on this point; the great brute, its tail nearly erect and its ears standing well out from its head, was advancing upon me—the picture of rage incarnate.

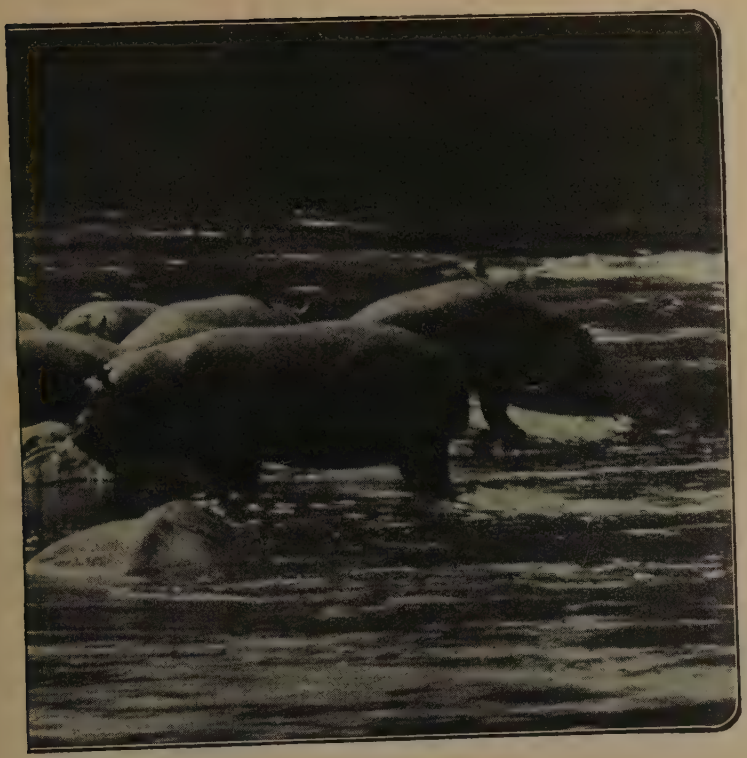
Rushing to one side, with my companion and a Masai gun-bearer hard on my heels, I quickly focused the camera, and succeeded in getting some good pictures.

Rhinoceroses are surprisingly sharp at turning, and this one was no exception. Rather, I should say, it was unusually practised in the art, for it swung round in our direction with a suddenness that was quite astonishing. Seeing that it meant business, and that its huge bulk made a path through the tangled grass more quickly than did our labouring feet, my companion pulled up, took aim, and fired, hitting the beast in the shoulder and turning it instantly.

As soon as the animal had lumbered off, we stopped for what we regarded as a well-earned rest, and to recover from the nervous strain through which we had passed. Rhinoceros stalking is no sport for people with weak hearts, its effect on the nerves of even the strongest hunters being by no means negligible.

I wish I could give you a more adequate idea of the actual state of one's feelings in these and similar circumstances, but the task is beyond me. I only know that for the great pitch of excitement to which one gets worked up when meeting big game at close quarters one often suffers a corresponding degree of "done-up-ness" and depression afterwards. Some hunters admit that the reaction is often so great that they come near to shedding tears, and I can well believe it.

Rhinoceroses are the subject of many conflicting stories among hunters. Some say that a "rhino" does not charge; others



crocodile to the left of the picture.

declare that it always does. My experience points to the fact that the disposition of an animal often varies in different districts. In some parts of East Africa rhinoceroses, I have found, are comparatively harmless, even when rudely disturbed. In the Olgerei district, where I was working, their moods seem to leave no room for doubt, for they invariably assume the offensive on sight.

One of the narrowest shaves I ever had was at the hands—or horn, I suppose I should say—of a rhinoceros. We were making our way back to Kiu, preparatory to returning to Nairobi, and were passing at the time through some tall grass. Suddenly our Masai guide, a fine specimen of a proverbially fine race, checked us with a sharp exclamation and, peering into the grass twenty yards ahead, I discerned a fine "rhino" sleeping peacefully on the path. For a reason that none of us afterwards could explain, we had failed that morning to load any of our weapons. The sound of this grave omission being repaired caused the rhinoceros to wake, and before any of us quite appreciated the gravity of the situation the big beast was up and charging the lot of us!

To me it seemed impossible that so bulky a beast could move so quickly. Hastily focusing my camera, I worked the shutter; then stepped aside to let my companion deal with the animal with his rifle. A charge of buckshot proved to be anything but a deterrent, the "rhino" snorting furiously as it came on. Snatching a 12-bore gun from the hands of one of the "boys," C—— fired again, supplementing his shot with one from a revolver. The infuriated animal made a dash at the nearest Masai, actually getting within touching distance of the man; after which it turned suddenly and made straight for me. Just as it got within half-a-dozen yards of me, the foremost Masai, with splendid coolness, leapt forward and plunged a spear into the rhino's side. This turned him again, by which time C—— had reloaded. He fired at its head once more, whereupon the rhinoceros swung round again and charged the now thoroughly frightened porters. Yet another shot dissuaded it from this enterprise, and the animal then gave up the chase in disgust and, still snorting loudly, made off into the bush. The encounter, extremely warm and brisk while it lasted, was one which I am not likely to forget for a very long time.

Although the majority of people seem to be unaware of the fact, one of the most dangerous animals in the African jungle is the buffalo. While circumspection has to be used in all big-game hunting, it is doubtful, I think, whether any animal demands the exercise of more care than the buffalo. Most hunters will agree with me that to be caught unprepared by a herd of these animals would be to find oneself in a terrible position. Hidden behind that shaggy and cumbersome-looking head, with its broad, curved horns, is a capacity for ferocious tenacity shown by no other beast.

Up to a year or so ago my experience of this species of buffalo had not been altogether successful. I had seen them in considerable numbers, and had followed in ex-President Roosevelt's steps in hunting them. My photographic "bag," however, was a poor one, and I therefore resolved, on finding myself in Africa three years ago, to make a special effort to film them.

Arriving at a suitable location in the Tana River area, I went out one day with this object in view, news having reached me that

a large herd of buffalo had been seen in a papyrus swamp several acres in extent. Working up wind, I came to the fringe of the swamp, where I concealed myself in a roughly-made "hide-up" to await events.

I stuck in that "hide-up" for five solid hours, without hearing so much as an untoward sound. Then, just as I was on the point of giving up my vigil in disgust, I heard a loud bellowing noise, and the next moment several buffalo came into view, two hundred yards away. By this time the light was too uncertain to make film photography worth while, so I started to manipulate a hand camera, and managed to get some tolerably good pictures.

The big beasts, fifteen or twenty in all, stood conspicuously in the tall grass, apparently trying to get wind of my whereabouts. One magnificent bull presented a fine target for a rifle, but I suppressed a strong desire to use that weapon and, with the object of securing a really good buffalo picture, crept cautiously out of my hiding-place, hoping to approach close enough, without being seen, to make this possible. Hardly had I got into the open, however, than the buffalo were joined by several others, the whole bunch of them, numbering thirty or forty in all, moving forward at a steady trot, which presently developed, for some reason then unknown to me, into a sudden rush towards me.

The sight of those big black brutes careering in my direction was more thrilling and awe-inspiring than I should have believed had I not experienced it. I waited perhaps two minutes, rather foolishly wondering whether some chance might not bring the animals to a full-stop within reasonably close distance; then, without further hesitation, I turned and literally *ran* up the nearest tree!

I saw then that I had been in far greater danger than I had thought. The buffalo had in some way become separated from the main herd, which shortly afterwards emerged from the swamp, and their sudden hurry had apparently been occasioned by an overwhelming desire to join forces once more. I never want to find myself in such a predicament again, for had there been no tree handy I should certainly not be here to tell the tale.

The East African plains teem with smaller game, including vast herds of antelope. One animal, the hartebeest, I soon discovered to be an intolerable nuisance, constituting itself, as it does, a sentinel to warn other animals of the hunter's approach. On one occasion I was anxious to photograph a big herd of zebra, animals which, by reason of their inherent shyness, I had not previously succeeded in "bagging" pictorially to the best advantage. Judging by their movements, I concluded that the zebra were working their way to a certain water-hole, near which there was a good chance of concealment. No sooner had I reached the water-hole, however, than a couple of hartebeest sighted me, and immediately galloped off to where the zebra were feeding, warning the herd with snorts that sent it scattering across the plains.

This happened not once, but many times, and as a result I realized why the hartebeest was so unpopular with the hunting fraternity, and why it so often fell a victim to the gun.

It goes almost without saying that the lion was the subject of elaborate photographic stalking arrangements on my part. The first lion I ever saw gave me such a thrill—not because it was too close, but because it marked the realization of an ambition cherished from childhood—that I omitted to remove the slide from the camera, thus losing an opportunity of recording photographically what to me was an historic occasion. Since then I have seen many lions and have had my fill of adventures in connection with them.

The incident I have just mentioned reminds me of a night when we baited the ground in front of the "hide-up" with zebra meat, afterwards remaining in concealment for three hours, waiting for a lion to appear. One did so with such suddenness, and with so little sound, that I marvelled at its cat-like qualities, which vastly increased my respect for the species.

I had planned to take a flashlight photograph. Accordingly, when I heard the subdued growling and crunching that betokened the lion's presence, I gently pressed the button that was to operate the flare. *The flash did not go off!*

This was a great disappointment, but I refused to let it worry me, although at the time I feared that I should never have quite such a good opportunity of getting a photograph of a lion at close range. Fortunately, my fears were ill-founded.

By way of introduction to the following account of a more thrilling adventure I would like the reader to indulge in a feat of imagination, and conceive me sitting in a camp chair under a group of trees, near which is my "hide-up." It is early morning. I have been cooped up in the "hide-up" all night, and have had very little sleep and no sport. I have just emerged to take a rest in the open, before going back to camp, a few hundred yards away, and turning in for an hour or two before breakfast. Stretching away beyond the trees is tall grass, waving in the gentle breeze of an African dawn, with thorn thickets clumped here and there in the middle distance. I feel indolent and pleasantly weary; my will is in abeyance for the time being, my mind a blank, stirred by fleeting thoughts of jobs to be done, of plans to be made, of letters to be written home, and sometimes of home itself.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, I become

A herd of zebra.

aware of something moving in the grass two hundred yards distant. A dog, no doubt. Our camp dogs are always early astir. I relapse into a reverie, bordering on sleep. Presently I pull myself together, and feebly resolve that I *must* turn in. Still I remain where I am. Something is still moving away down there in the grass. Looks like two dogs now. Out scouting for their breakfast, I suppose. Rather big dogs—seem to have such massive heads. But this early morning light is deceptive. Very deceptive. They seem to be getting nearer—about eighty yards away now. Suppose they are dogs all right? Lively if they turned out to be lions! Lions. . . . Yes, it would be a joke if they were lions . . . Dash it! I ought to make sure. One of them is coming forward alone —pretty big chap for a dog—Heavens, it's not a dog at all—*it's a lion!*

Two of 'em; two great tawny brutes big enough to stagger anyone!

My first impulse was to seize my camera—mere force of habit, I suppose—but the moment I moved the foremost lion advanced with a few long, deliberate strides; then stood stock-still again, its eyes fixed majestically on mine. Realizing in that instant that my *rôle* of photographer was misplaced at this juncture, I reached forward with as little movement as possible and grasped my rifle. In my excitement I overlooked the sights, presuming that these were set for a hundred yards, at which range I invariably fixed them. Taking a quick, careful aim I fired at the animal, only to find that the shot had gone high. My next shot fared no better. Then I noticed that the sights were set at three hundred yards, having been left in that position by my gun-bearer, who had used the weapon the previous day.

Almost in the same moment the thought flashed upon me that I had no ammunition except the six cartridges in the magazine and chamber of the rifle. Indeed, it was entirely a matter of luck that I had my rifle with me at all, for I was not far from camp and had remarked overnight that I had a good mind not to arm myself for once. Realizing, then, that the next shot or two meant everything to me, I once more took aim and fired. This time the big lion rolled over.

Meanwhile, the second lion stood motionless, and apparently uncertain what to do. I therefore fired again and succeeded in scaring the animal off. No sooner had I done so than the first lion suddenly leapt up and, roaring defiantly, slunk off into the bush. I followed, thinking that I might have a chance to put the poor beast out of its misery, but although its roaring could be heard for several minutes, I was unable to track it for more than a few yards, and accordingly I returned to camp.

Giraffes feeding.

I do not think anyone could do descriptive justice to that experience; certainly I could not adequately describe the emotions it engendered. All that I can say is that in a fairly adventurous career this ranks as the most thrilling adventure that ever befell me.

Lion photography has a fascination entirely its own. Most of my best pictures were the result of hours of waiting and watching, during which time I had to restrain myself almost from blinking, so essential to success is lack of movement and suspicious sound. And quite as often as I have obtained pictures I have spent whole nights without getting nearer lions than hearing them roar in the forest depths.

It was after a long spell of disappointment that I set out, one glorious May morning, for the Thika river, in which neighbourhood lions, I had heard, were fairly numerous. On our way we happened to spot some vultures in a tree—a sign of the presence, more often than not, of meat, most likely a lion's kill. Hastening ahead, I searched for the kill, but for an hour could find nothing of the kind. Finally one of the "boys" came up and, aided by a keen sense of smell, located blood in some grass not far away. The trail led us to a bank, at the foot of which was the dry bed of a stream. Here we found the remains of a partly-eaten hartebeest, which had undoubtedly been killed by a lion.

From the point of view of getting flash-light pictures, which were what I was after, no position could have been more suitable. The background provided by the bank was excellent, while some overhanging trees made a splendid place for the erection of a "hide-up." This was accordingly built, three cameras being placed in different positions, so that photographs could be got from three totally different angles.

At six o'clock that night C—— and I had a hurried meal, after which we crawled into the "hide-up," carefully closing the opening through which we entered with the lopped branches of a tree. Half an hour later, dusk having fallen, a slight sound came to our ears from outside the "hide-up," and presently we were able to distinguish a shadowy form making its way cautiously through the grass. Very soon the shadow was followed by another, and yet another. That they were lions there was no doubt at all, and I was keyed to a pitch of intense excitement at the prospect of securing what proved to be really excellent photographs.

By way of making sure that the kill had not been dragged away without our knowledge, I presently switched on my little electric pocket lamp. Three lions there were, sure enough, but only one was close enough to photograph satisfactorily. In the light of the lamp the animal's eyes gleamed like diamonds — a really striking revelation,

which for the moment gripped me intensely and left me unwilling to disturb the magnificent creature. However, it was evident that the lion was on the *qui vive*, so I pressed the button, and with a blinding flash the pictures were taken.

Our next task was to re-set the cameras and the flashlight. Both C—— and myself went out, crawling back to the shelter with feelings of relief when the job had been done. An hour later a fine lioness appeared on the bank, and slowly made her way towards the kill. When she was within a dozen yards of us I pressed the button again.

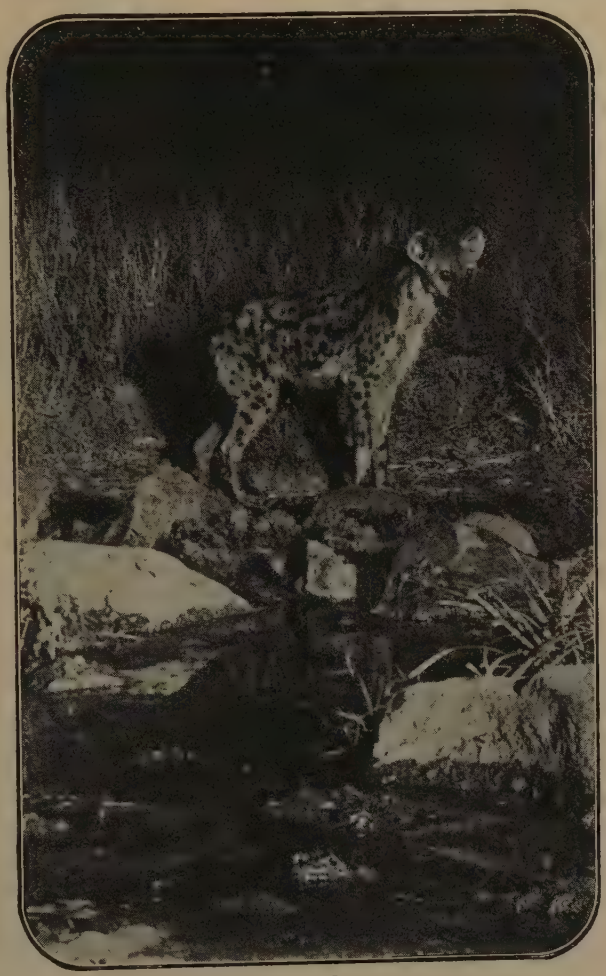
Going out to re-set the cameras was more unnerving this time than before. For one thing, the night now seemed pitch dark, while for another the roaring of several lions came from the bush; evidently our flashlight did no more than scare them momentarily. Hardly had we got settled in the "hide-up" again than growls came from quite near, while the sound of crunching reached our ears. There is something more than mere uncanniness in hearing these sounds on a dark night and not knowing exactly whence they come. Both of us, after a while, found the continuous growling quite unnerving.

Three lions came into view this time, striding majestically to and fro before descending the bank to the kill. Then, to make us more alert and uncomfortable, a fourth lion, giving vent to bloodcurdling growls, approached the scene from directly behind us, and for a few palpitating moments we seriously thought we were about to be attacked. At one time this lion was only *three* yards from where we crouched, hardly daring to breathe, and I began to reflect that perhaps after all wild animal photography was rather a foolish sort of game.

Once more I pressed the button, and again the flash went off, this time so loudly that both of us, our nerves on edge, jumped perceptibly. The lions, however, did not rush out of sight, but merely slunk away, obviously enraged at being cheated of their meal.

With fear and trembling we ventured out into the open again to re-set the cameras, the roaring of many lions seeming almost to shake the ground as we walked. Never do I remember a more awe-inspiring or eerie night than this; and there were no more thankful men in all Africa than us when at last dawn began to streak the sky and we made our way back to camp.

One day, shortly after this, I observed on entering a wood an animal which I at first thought was a young rhinoceros. Thinking that the parent could not be far away, I seized my rifle, by way of being prepared. A second and more prolonged look convinced me that I was in the presence of an animal of a species unknown to me, at any rate from personal experience. I therefore substituted my camera for the rifle and "snapped" it. As I did so, I realized that the creature was none other than the giant bush pig, one of the rarest of African beasts. This animal, the biggest member of the pig family, has been known to science for only about twenty years, during which time only a very small number of specimens have been seen by white men. I had never thought, even in my wildest imaginings, that I should encounter it, far less photograph it, and so far as I know I am the only person who has done so.



A young hyena.

Sporting Stories

A WIPE IN THE EYE

By GEOFFERY RAVENSHOLME

A British officer's amusing account of a lion-hunt, showing that on occasion one spear may be more effective than several rifles.

I WAS working one day in my office (a little grass hut with mud walls) when my orderly informed me that an old man would like to speak to me. As the man in question was standing outside I beckoned to him to come in and asked him what he wanted. He told me that his chief had sent him to ask the Englishmen to come out to his village, about twenty-five miles away, and shoot some lions which for the past fortnight had been nightly stealing goats and sheep. These lions had worried the natives so much that the chief had changed the position of his village twice during the last fourteen days.

It is, I suppose, a compliment to the British flag to find that the simple native has confidence in its protective influence and in the prowess of the white officer who represents that protective force. Candidly, however, while I have shot most animals, large and small, that abound in East Africa, I cannot claim to be keen on lion-hunting for its own sake. I do not mind shooting one in the open if it cannot be avoided, for the simple reason that when such is the case it invariably means that if you don't get the lion he will certainly get *you*. Even in the open I very much prefer to let a lion go his way in peace if he shows the least inclination to do so, as, in fact, he very often does.

Having cross-examined the old man very thoroughly, I went over to Trevor, the only other European in the settlement, to fix our plan of campaign, for of course we had to go. Trevor, who was an ardent hunter, jumped at the chance.

As the village lay in a district which really needed a patrol, I decided to send off our *safari* (caravan) at once and to ride out ourselves later.

Trevor and I did not arrive in camp until after dark, and as it was then too late to take our bearings, we decided to have a night in peace and quietness and move on the next day.

Our boys were preparing our dinner and I was sitting in a hot bath feeling comfortably tired, for we had ridden twenty-five miles, when suddenly there was a tremendous uproar—men shouting and cattle snorting and trying to break out of their *zareba*. Then, just as suddenly, all was quiet.

It transpired that the lions had already paid us an informal visit and departed as unceremoniously, taking with them a couple of our goats from within twenty yards of our beds! This was cheering, as showing that, at any rate, we had not come on a wild goose chase.

We had a very pleasant little dinner and retired to bed at about nine o'clock. Before turning in I told my boy to pick up my saddle-bags and hang them on the veranda of my tent, as I did not want the white ants to eat them. In the course of the night I remember hearing a hyena come into our camp and get mixed up with our pots and pans in the kitchen. I then fell into a deep sleep, but was awakened by my dog barking. Suddenly I felt a terrific tug at my tent, which I thought was going to collapse, and, sitting up in bed, I was just in time to see a hyena dashing out of the veranda with my saddle-bags in his mouth.

In the morning we traced its footsteps and were able to locate the spot where it had chawed up my cherished bags. Nothing remained of them but two or three strips of leather, a couple of buckles, a pair of spurs, and a tin-opener—and these were hardly less digestible than some of the other contents which the brute must have eaten.

We then went on and had a good look at the place where the lions had entered the village the night before. We were pleased to discover that the pug marks were big ones. Having found a suitable spot on which to lie out and wait for the lions that night, we gave the chief orders to build us a little *zareba* there.

This *zareba* was simply a little round hut-like place just sufficiently large for our blankets to be put down side by side. It was made of what is called "wait-a-bit" thorn.

We then went back to breakfast and had sufficient work to keep us in our tents until 4 p.m., at which hour we went out to inspect the *zareba*. This appeared to be satisfactory, and we asked the chief if he had an old donkey that we could kill for bait. Very reluctantly he produced a decrepit animal which it was really an act of humanity to kill.

The donkey having been shot, we told off one of the natives to drag a portion of the meat over the tracks that the lions had made on the previous night.

The *zareba* seemed to me to be a wretchedly flimsy affair, but, as Trevor explained, it was not intended as a protection against lions but merely as a means of preventing the moon from shining on our rifle barrels. I could not echo his enthusiasm as to the skilful manner in which it had been put together. I should have preferred one made of Portland stone.

Returning to our camp I found that species of enthusiasm which is born of excitement rising within me. When we had had a few more whiskies and sodas we began to "buck" about our shooting prowess. Trevor told me once more of the nine lions that he and another man had shot in one day some two months before. I began to feel bloodthirsty, and by the time we were starting dinner and had absorbed a couple of gins and bitters, I was becoming rather jealous of Trevor's exploits, and I thought that if nine lions were to come our way that night I should like to get him out of the way and shoot them all myself.

Dinner was a very brief affair, and immediately afterwards we went to the *zareba*. Our orderlies had already taken our guns out. As we approached I was surprised to see my orderly spring suddenly into the air with a loud yell, while two or three of the other natives were apparently doing their best to demolish our frail shelter by showering blows on it with their sticks and thrusting at it with spears. When we were near enough, however, to hear them crying out: "*Nyoka! nyoka!*" I knew that they were after a snake. I asked my orderly if he had killed it. "No," he told me, "but it is only a small one, and it is the will of God."

I am ashamed to say that I derived very little comfort from this pious utterance, and once more I decided that this sort of lion shooting was a very poor game. To me a snake is always a snake, no matter what its size, and I should have preferred this one to have been twenty feet long, for then we should have found it. The prospect of passing the night in close proximity to a wounded snake rather damped my ardour. However, it was now too dark to look for it, so we crawled into the *zareba* and the orderlies pulled branches against it and shut us in.

There was no room to stand up or even to sit, nor could we get out without a protracted and most unpleasant struggle with the thorn hedge. Altogether I felt almost as helpless as the tethered white goats who were destined to be the victims of the King of Beasts.

On my right side I placed my double-barrelled ·450 and on my left my 12-bore shot-gun, and I remember wishing they were both twice the size and had six barrels instead of two. Trevor had a double-barrelled ·500 and also a double-barrelled ·375.

Within three yards of us was the dead donkey, and tied at its head and tail respectively were two wretched goats, kicking up a terrible row. I could have touched one of them with my rifle. Poor beggars, I only hope that they were less frightened than I was!

I remember remarking to Trevor that if these goats continued their noise I should not be able to get any sleep.

"Sleep!" he echoed. "Good heavens, man! You are not going to sleep! You are out to shoot lions!"

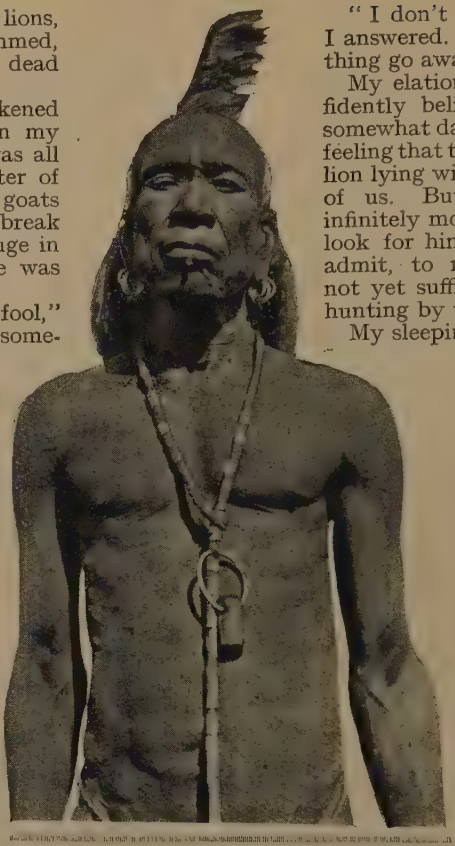
"All right, old bean," I replied, heroically, "you can count on me. I'll keep awake." So saying, I promptly turned over on my left side and fell into a profound slumber.

I dreamed of charging lions, rifles which always jammed, wounded snakes, and dead donkeys.

Suddenly I was awakened by something jumping on my back, and I thought it was all over with me. As a matter of fact it was only one of the goats which had managed to break loose and had taken refuge in the *zareba*. My language was unprintable.

"Keep quiet, you fool," growled Trevor. "There's something around; I have seen its eyes several times. Here, get hold of that goat of yours and tie it up again."

I caught the unfortunate animal, tore myself badly in getting out of the *zareba*, and tied him up. I do not know whether I felt more of an assassin than a hero, but I realized that I was risking my life for the sake of condemning to death an innocent victim. In any case, when I had done the deed I offered up a fervent prayer that if there were any lions coming our way that night they would kindly wait until I had got back into our flimsy shelter.



The plucky old spearman who finally killed the lion.

I had just forced myself and what remained of my clothes into the *zareba*, and was actually falling asleep again, for I was very tired, when a sudden disturbing thought woke me up. "I say, Trevor," I remarked, "that goat didn't seem to have much difficulty in getting in here. I hope it is true that lions prefer sheep and goats to human beings?"

"S-s-s-sh-h!" he hissed. "Be quiet, you silly ass. There is something there on your left!"

My heart stopped beating, and cold sweat poured down my face. Out of the darkness peered a pair of gleaming eyes. Then, all of a sudden, there was a rush. I saw a flash of white as my goat was lifted into the air by some invisible force, and I distinctly heard the poor creature's back being broken.

"Shoot! Shoot! you fool!" yelled Trevor.

I let fly with both barrels, aiming about an inch above the white. I heard a thud and saw the body of the goat drop to the ground. Then all was silence.

"Did you get it?" asked Trevor, excitedly.

"I don't know, but I think so," I answered. "I didn't hear anything go away."

My elation at having, as I confidently believed, made a hit was somewhat damped by the unpleasant feeling that there might be a wounded lion lying within three or four yards of us. But it would have been infinitely more unpleasant to go and look for him in the dark. I must admit, to my shame, that I was not yet sufficiently keen to go lion-hunting by the light of a match.

My sleepiness of the earlier part of the night had now completely vanished; I was wondering all the time what had happened to the animal outside. Then something crawled over my hand, which I decided must be the snake. Fortunately I was sufficiently wide awake to let it crawl on without molesting it or shaking it off, and so I escaped a bite. I do not think that I have ever waited so impatiently for the dawn to appear as I did that night. It was that confounded Trevor who was getting all the sleep now.

As soon as it was light enough to see around us I woke him and we looked out of our *zareba* to see what I had shot. It turned out to be an unusually large female leopard, and she had been shot clean through the head.

Trevor did not attempt to disguise the fact that he was green with envy, for although he had beaten my humble record as a lion-killer over and over again, it appeared that he had never bagged a leopard. I was rather pleased myself, but my joy was mainly due to the fact that that horrible night was over and I could have a bath and breakfast in comfort.

I turned round to pick up my hat, but dropped it with a yell. Comfortably curled up in it was the snake! Trevor, without saying a word, put five revolver bullets into it, and I completed the destruction of my headgear by bashing it in with my rifle butt. Then, very gingerly, I lifted it up, to find that the snake was not merely dead but quite stiff. It must have crawled into the hat to die after the natives had wounded it the night before!

For three more nights we sat up in that infernal *zareba*, but, although the lions came each night and carried off goats and sheep

from the native village close at hand, they did not visit us. Beyond shooting three hyenas, five jackals, and a couple of *chenzi* dogs, we had no luck at all.

It was just as well for the sake of our prestige that I had shot my leopard. These beasts do quite as much harm as lions, and it is very hard to say which is the more dangerous. Many well-known big-game shots think it harder to get a leopard than a lion.

On the last night of our visit, the largest of the lions—the one whose pug-marks we had admired—visited the village once too often. After killing a couple of goats and mauling one of the natives badly, it was killed by a plucky old spearman.

When we were leaving the camp the venerable chief came to bid us good-bye. He summed up the situation succinctly, if somewhat brutally. In his quaint native dialect, and more in sorrow than in anger, he told us: "You two big white chiefs come a day's march, bring many guns. You build a special house, you keep awake for four nights, you kill my donkeys and let their flesh rot so that my men cannot eat it—and you do not kill the lion. But one of my own men, an old, old man, kills him with a spear."

"Hang it!" said Trevor, as we turned away. "That's the worst wipe in the eye I've ever had! For goodness' sake don't say anything about it!"

AT GRIPS WITH A LEOPARD

By J. H. MAIN

"I had this story direct from Jan Pienaar," writes Mr. Main. "He was, as stated, a ganger on the Beira Mashonaland Rhodesia Railway, his section being located about half-way between Kalomo and Broken Hill."

A YEAR or so ago, while travelling in Rhodesia, I had occasion to spend some weeks in the neighbourhood of Broken Hill, and with a friend I obtained permission from the district engineer to travel along the railway line at our own risk on a pump-trolley. We employed our time, while waiting for another man to join us, in making trips to the various gangers' cottages. These gangers are foreman-platelayers, and each has ten miles of line to look after.

Jan Pienaar, a Dutchman, was one of these railroad employés, and contrived to combine his duties on the line with the care of a herd of fifty head of cattle. With his

wife and family he lived in a railway cottage located in the centre of his ten-mile stretch. Like all Boers he was a fine hunter, and one day he told us about his experience with a spotted leopard, and showed us the scars that resulted.

As sometimes happens, the adventure occurred almost on his own doorstep. He had often been on hunting expeditions after leopards, lions, and other big game, and had slept in the open and taken all the usual risks without meeting with any mishap worthy of note, and he never ceased to be astonished that the adventure of his life should occur at home.

I should explain, before relating his story, that it is necessary in this country to gather the stock inside *zarebas*, or kraals, at night. The walls of these enclosures consist of tall saplings pointed at the top and with their butts sunk firmly into the ground. The poles are securely bound together with bark, all the interstices being filled with dense, prickly bushes of tiger-thorn, and the gates securely fastened at night. The *zareba* has to be high enough to make it impossible for a lion, or tiger (the Dutch name for leopard) to leap over and get away with its prey.

One night Pienaar heard a disturbance in the cattle kraal. Lighting a lantern and taking his rifle, he went out to investigate. He was convinced that some beast of prey was about, but entirely failed to discover it. This went on for two or three nights in succession, and the ganger became nervous about his children, and decided that something drastic must be done to scare away the midnight visitor. He therefore fixed a loaded rifle on his back *stoep* (veranda) with a large piece of beef hung in front and connected to the rifle in such a way that a tug at the meat would pull the trigger, whereupon a soft-nosed bullet would be fired straight into the beef.

In the small hours one morning he heard a light pad-pad of feet outside his back door. Next moment there came a tremendous report, followed by sounds of snarling and scuffling on the *stoep*. As he knew that wild animals usually hunt in pairs Pienaar wisely kept inside until daylight. Then, venturing out, he found a magnificent male leopard lying dead, with a bullet hole in its skull. The skin was a beauty. So far so good!

That evening Pienaar was disturbed by the constant calling and growling of the female, evidently seeking her mate. He endured it for one night, but after that his gang of natives began to rebel, asking permission to go to their home kraal at night, as they considered it was too risky for them to sleep in the mud huts provided by the railway company. This meant quitting work too early, so Pienaar determined to rid himself of the dangerous brute, or at least to drive it away.

That night there was again a disturbance amongst his cattle, the beasts bellowing with fear and moving restlessly. The danger of a stampede was very real, for the terrified animals might make a concerted rush and break down the kraal. Pienaar therefore secured his rifle and stole out of the house, intending to go along the path and quieten the animals. He thought he noticed an unfamiliar grey-coloured stone at the side of the pathway, but as he had decorated his garden with large white-washed rocks he did not pay much heed to it, although it passed through his mind that someone must have moved that particular stone. Pienaar was creeping along, quietly and furtively, looking around in the pale moonlight for the disturber of his peace, when suddenly he was seized by the shoulders and found himself staring into the gaping mouth of the female leopard!

The shock was so sudden and unnerving that he dropped his rifle, but in an instant he recovered his presence of mind and gripped the animal by the throat with both hands, thus preventing it from biting his face. There they stood, tense and silent, locked in a death-grip—the leopard standing on its hind legs, resting all its weight upon him, and he with his muscles braced and his fingers clenched upon the beast's throat. Pienaar dared not shout or move, although the leopard's formidable claws were tearing his shoulders and arms cruelly, for if he did so he knew that the animal would tear itself away, leap upon him again, and kill him. He was within a few feet of his back door, but round the corner, so that his wife would not be able to see him if she looked out.

How long man and leopard stood there Pienaar cannot say, but it must have been a considerable time—a time that felt to him like an eternity. The leopard stood so close to him, glaring into his eyes, that he could feel its fœtid breath on his face.

When the rifle dropped from his hands it had fallen against a tree, and now lay with the muzzle pointing towards him about three feet from his right knee. How to get hold of it was the question. That the beast remained so quiet and still he could only attribute to the fact that he remained passive himself, but he realized that things could not go on thus for ever. So gently, ever so gently, he loosened the grasp of his right hand on the brute's throat, at the same time tightening the grip of his left. Equally carefully he began to crouch just a little lower; then he cautiously extended his right hand towards the rifle—all the time staring into the leopard's blazing eyes.

Presently, with an inward thrill, he found that he could just touch the weapon with his fingers. With infinite care he edged over until he was able to grasp it firmly. Now came the crucial moment! Should the rifle, as he pulled it towards him, catch

"There they stood, tense and silent, locked in a death grip."

even momentarily in the undergrowth, the noise would immediately galvanize the fierce brute into irresistible action. So guarded and gentle had his movements been hitherto, however, that the leopard did not seem to notice them, standing there on its hind legs, its claws fixed in his shoulders, staring unblinkingly into his eyes and quietly straining to reach his throat.

Yet one incautious move or jerk, Pienaar realized, would instantly transform the brute into a raging tornado of fury, against which he would have practically no chance. So, with an unspoken prayer on his lips, he tightened his grip again and began to pull on the rifle. As luck would have it the weapon came away freely from the bushes, and he managed to draw it over inch by inch until its butt rested on the ground against the inside of his right foot. From here he slowly raised it, by lifting movements of his fingers, until the muzzle pointed straight under the leopard's jaw. A little farther upwards, till he got his finger on the trigger; then he released his grip on the beast's throat, pulled the trigger, and leapt backwards towards the house and safety.

The animal, he discovered later, was killed instantaneously, the bullet breaking its neck.

Next day Jan Pienaar was removed to hospital by special train, as the claw-wounds on his shoulders and arms were serious. Blood-poisoning set in, and it was two months or more before he was able to resume his work on the line. He will carry to his grave the scars of the wounds made by his adversary in that horrible night encounter.

SPORTING STORIES

The crocodile that figures in this story. Notice the collection of articles taken from its stomach.

THE MAN-EATING CROCODILE

By P. A. T. SIMEY

"This narrative is strictly true," writes the Author; "being the Native Commissioner in charge at Balovale I took care to verify the facts. How many people this brute actually took will never be ascertained, as numerous victims undoubtedly went to their fate unknown."

THOUGH his home, and the scene of his depredations, was Balovale, a Government station in Northern Rhodesia, that crocodile was known and feared up and down the Zambezi for hundreds of miles. He was described by some of the natives, with their usual exaggeration, as a veritable giant, but one thing was certain: he was undoubtedly responsible for most of the deaths attributed to him.

The history of this crocodile does not go back earlier than 1910, when he started his evil career by seizing a Native Police messenger's *piccanin* whilst the poor little youngster was bathing. After that, apparently, he did little damage until 1916, only taking a couple of native women who were fishing with wicker fish-baskets. After this he either took a fancy to human flesh or else developed more of an appetite.

The following year he took the wife of a local chief who had gone down to wash at the river. Her friends, seeing her drawn under, gave the alarm and the Government official then stationed at Balovale went out at once in a boat in a fruitless attempt at rescue. All he saw in the clear, deep water was the nightmare sight of the woman being held down by the crocodile on the river bed, her arms showing clearly, with brass bangles on the wrists. Directly the boat passed above the great brute he stirred up the sand with a flick of his tail and nothing more was seen.

After that he seized two more natives, and a little later he took the wife of another chief, the body being recovered half eaten. In 1921 a lad was taken whilst bathing, and the Author, who had been watching him only a few minutes before, hurried out in a boat in a vain attempt to recover the body.

In spite of the crocodile's sinister record and continual warnings by all and sundry, the natives still persisted in doing the most foolhardy and dangerous things, such as drawing water at dusk, standing knee-deep in the river washing clothes, and fishing by wading with wicker-basket traps. Two boys had lucky escapes whilst engaged in some of the aforesaid undertakings, one having a water calabash snatched from his hands and crushed in the brute's powerful jaws, and another being warned just in time by a companion, who saw from a boat near by the lurking crocodile creeping slowly up within a few feet of the bank. The fact that neither of these boys was in more than six inches of water and within a yard of the bank, and also that both attacks were made in broad daylight, shows how bold the brute had become.

Needless to say, whenever the man-eater was seen by any European who had a rifle handy he was invariably greeted with a shot, but, being very cute, he seldom ventured from the shade of the overhanging trees on the far side of the river, some four hundred yards distant. This meant a most difficult shot even to an expert marksman, since Balovale Station stands on a cliff some two hundred feet above the river, and the sighting of a dropping shot at such a range is more a matter of good luck than good management. Once, however, I was favoured with such a stroke of luck, and as far as the onlookers could see my bullet got home on the crocodile's side.

Nothing more was heard of Mr. Man-eater for some days, and it was fervently hoped that the bullet had done its work. However, shortly after a woman with her baby on her back was taken a mile down stream, and a few days later the local trader's dog vanished, so that it was only too evident he was still "on the job." We therefore decided to try other methods to rid the river of this deadly menace, and I had a powerful double hook forged by one of the native messengers. This was baited with a leg of goat and fastened to a large overhanging tree by twenty feet of welded steel chain, the baited hook hanging just clear of the water, on the end of a canoe. Next morning we found that our crocodile was still hungry, for he had seized the bait, bent the stout hook almost into the shape of a corkscrew, and departed.

We tried again, baiting with a leg of pork and altering the tackle to four feet only of chain, this chain being connected to thirty feet of rope having at its other end a float of dry reeds. The idea was that if the hook was taken and swallowed the crocodile could get no purchase and no resistance to rid himself of his unwelcome mouthful. Whatever he did he would simply pull on the float and trail it about the river, and on coming up to breathe could be quickly shot.

Again we were met by failure. The baited hook fell off its support into the river and the tiger-fish demolished the pork and left us the hook. Still hoping for the best, we baited and set it a third time. Then, one morning a week later, a wild cheer was heard down by the landing stage. The hook had done its work and even more, for our dreaded enemy was not only caught but dead, floating upside down under the thick trees!

It was not easy at first to understand how the brute had come to its end, since the float had locked itself in the overhanging branches, and a smart jerk by such a powerful creature would have snapped the rope like cotton. The rope and chain, however, were intact. It was only after going out in a canoe to haul in the carcass that we discovered the explanation of the mystery. The crocodile, having spent some time under water after taking the bait, finally came up to breathe, only to find himself under a thick network of branches which prevented him reaching the surface. When he struggled to get clear he discovered that he was firmly and painfully hooked (we found the hook embedded in his stomach). His range of manœuvre was limited by the fouled rope and float, and his need for breath was becoming momentarily more pressing. The pull on the rope caused too much pain for him to risk a rush for open water, and so he drowned. It was a strange coincidence that the overhanging trees which had afforded him cover on so many occasions should ultimately cause his death.

After dragging the body ashore and laying it right way up, we discovered my bullet wound in the brute's side. It had ripped off a large scale, but had failed to penetrate the skin. Firmly embedded in the back was the blade of a spear, half rusted away. This was instantly recognized as belonging to a messenger who, some seven years previously, had driven it into the back of a crocodile which had attacked him and his wife when drawing water.

Some thirty natives assisted us in bringing the body to the top of the cliff for a post-mortem examination. From tail tip to snout the man-eater measured exactly twelve feet —not quite so large as popular rumour had led one to believe! In the brute's stomach were found various clues as to the man-eater's crimes.

First came the jaw-bones of the trader's dog; then balls of natives' hair; then an assortment of brass bangles, including the spiral armlets of the first chief's wife, taken in 1917; and again more bones, some human, some animal. These are shown spread out on the man-eater's head in the photograph. Some of the more interesting exhibits were cleaned, disinfected, and kept as curios, and the trader was presented with his dog's jaw-bones as a keepsake! Portions of the brute's flesh were then cut off to rebait the hook, which was set again in case our friend had any understudies lurking around. The head now adorns a tall pole at the side of the main road through the Station.

On discussing the affair with some of the messengers I was solemnly informed that any natives taken by him were not killed, but were carried away and sold as slaves in Portuguese West Africa! An old local headman, they added, used to advise the brute whom to select as his victims. Strangely enough, as soon as news of the crocodile's capture and death reached him, the old headman came along, sat down beside the corpse, and clapped his hands. This is the local form of greeting and is also used to express pleasure. Personally I think he meant the latter, as the death of the man-eater meant the death of his own evil and entirely undeserved reputation.

The CANNIBAL ISLANDS

By Clifford W. Collinson, F.R.G.S.

A series of articles which our readers will find particularly interesting. Mr. Collinson has spent several years in the Solomons, a strikingly beautiful group where, in the unexplored interior of the larger islands, cannibalism and head-hunting are still practised, and many tribes have never set eyes on a white man. In this instalment Mr. Collinson describes his visit to the mysterious island of Choiseul and its hidden stronghold.

III.—(*Conclusion.*)

THE completely wild character of Choiseul, one of the larger islands of the group, may be judged from the fact that on the latest Admiralty chart the coast line is simply dotted in, showing that even its shores have never been properly surveyed. There are no soundings or depths marked, and the meagre information as to "reefs reported in 1908" conveys very little to mariners, who go there very infrequently. The interior of the island is still less known. On the chart it is simply shown as a blank enclosed in the problematical coastline. Only a very few white men have ever visited it, one of them being Mr. Goldie, the head of the Wesleyan Mission in the Solomons, who had been there

The Author with an iguana.

Tropical vegetation of the island jungles.

the year before I went. I had the good fortune to accompany Mr. Goldie on his return visit.

One dull, cloudy morning we sailed up the north-east coast of mysterious Choiseul, which appeared to us as a mass of verdure-clad mountains wreathed in mist and cloud. At about 1.30 p.m., on June 20th, we anchored between a small islet and the mainland at Cape Giraud. On the beach, at a point we had just passed, a group of natives had gathered, and a canoe appeared to be making for us. As soon as we launched the dinghy of the missionary ship on which we were travelling, however, those on shore disappeared like magic into the dense bush that fringed the sloping beach, while the one-man canoe turned away and scurried round the point out of sight.

It seems that, every now and again, a passing trader sells to the natives, in return for island produce, including copra, such articles as he has in his possession that they care for — printed cotton goods, scented soap (of which they are very fond), tobacco, and matches. It must be a very rare thing for a trader to land, if, indeed, one has ever done so.

As we sat on board the missionary schooner viewing the landscape, Mr. Goldie began to tell me about his previous visit and a native village, strongly fortified, in the centre of the island. His account of his trip to this place fascinated me, and when he suggested that at some future time he might, if opportunity offered, go there again, as he had left in the village a native missionary, I could not resist proposing to him that he should make his second visit the next day and that I should accompany him. Mr. Goldie tried to explain the perilous nature of such a trip, but I was so bent on him taking me to see this hidden village that I persisted in my entreaties, and finally he consented to make the journey with me.

At daybreak next morning, with our "boys" carrying a supply of food and other articles which we might be expected to need, we landed and walked along the beach. It was a lonely but very beautiful spot. Not a native could we see, however, wherever we looked. The sand on the shore was pitted with the holes of countless crabs of tiny dimensions. Solitary as our surroundings were, it was still difficult for me to realize that this ground was practically virgin soil to a white man except for the landing of Mr. Goldie the year before.

As already stated, only at very infrequent intervals does a trader come to Choiseul, for the Solomons are well off the trade routes. When a trader *does* visit the island, taking every precaution to guard against treachery, the natives—in small numbers only—are allowed to board his vessel to carry on their trade with him. The islanders have the reputation of being very fierce and are usually well armed, even the women and children carrying weapons.

One hesitates to labour the point, but it is a fact that both Mr. Goldie and myself, together with our attendant boys, went ashore quite unarmed. This was by the advice of my white companion, who was of opinion that it was the safest course to pursue. Had we been armed it is probable that the natives, from hiding-places in the bush, would have made short work of us.

As it was, there was not a soul in sight as we walked along the beach between the dense tropical foliage and the pounding surf, but Mr. Goldie remarked that there were probably hundreds of eyes closely watching us through the thick matted growth.

At last we reached a little clearing with a few native huts and a group of almost naked savages squatting near them, apparently oblivious of our presence. Walking up, Mr. Goldie addressed one of them, but absolutely without result, the man continuing to watch the sea as if he had not heard a word. He was a very fierce-looking individual; indeed, they all looked like warriors. Beside each native, as he sat upon the ground, stood his shield and tomahawk, fixed upright in the sand. The tomahawk has a long handle and a small axe-head ground to a razor-like edge.

For a time there was a distinct tension in the air, but presently welcome relief was afforded by a native who knew Mr. Goldie, and offered to lead us through the bush up the native path to the fortified village—called by the natives Ginjapili—which is situated about the middle of the island.

Our guide requested us to wait until he got his rifle, and then, leaving the group of wild-looking savages still gazing steadily seawards, chewing betel-nut meanwhile, he led us farther along the shore to the commencement of the native path.

Suddenly the guide turned inland, and in a moment we had passed from the brilliant sunshine of the beach to the green twilight of the bush, picking our way in single file along the trampled native track that wound in and out between the trunks of huge overhanging trees, whose branches were festooned with creepers and the long ropes of parasite vegetation. Underfoot were masses of ferns, while the rotting leaves of scores of years slipped slimily beneath our tread. Occasionally the path led over fallen tree-trunks, covered with moss and lichen, and almost invisible in the riot of vegetation.

One had no time to glance around, for the soil was a slippery red clay and, what with the out-cropping tree roots, twisting like greasy serpents under the treacherous covering of squelching clay, and the frequent barriers of knee-high fallen trunks, constant watchfulness was imperative. Had we been able to look up it is possible, though not very probable, that we might have seen signs of

the numerous native warriors who were undoubtedly tracking us on a parallel course to guard against possible treachery on our part. Conscious, however, of our peaceful designs, we went on.

Scarcely a sound could be heard but those we made ourselves, for the native trackers are adepts in their art. Occasionally we heard the cooing of a few pigeons and saw the flash of a startled parakeet as it disappeared from view. Now and then a lizard scurried away, and once there was a prodigious rustling and we glimpsed the disappearing form of an iguana.

Our path frequently led, for ten or twenty yards at a time, along the sloping, slippery trunks of trees lying prone amongst the chaos of undergrowth, with unknown pitfalls on either side, hidden by the rank vegetation.

The track rose steadily all the way, sometimes steeply up a treacherous clay bank, where every step was an effort, the rotting leaves slipping under one's feet on the slimy clay, and the sticky heat of the sodden ground choking one's panting lungs.

Not a breath of air penetrated the intricate lacework of the dense forest. To say that one perspired is to fail to touch the fringe of the truth. I simply *dripped* at every pore, the portion of my khaki shirt which overhung my leather belt becoming absolutely saturated. Despite our discomforts, however, we pushed on, always climbing, now and again getting glimpses between the trees of sudden valleys, some of them partially cleared and planted as native gardens. The inhabitants of Choiseul are great agriculturists, in spite of their warlike qualities.

At last, after several hours' journeying, we caught sight, on the summit of a conical hill far above us, of the stronghold which was the object of our journey. Its outstanding features were two watch-towers perched on the bare trunks of a couple of coconut palms and the wooden stockades that ran like a wall round the crest of the peak. Word of our coming had evidently been given, for there was not a sign of a native and no opposition was made to our entrance as we crawled through a narrow slit in the outer stockade, and then through a still narrower opening in the inner one.

There were two distinct palisades protecting the village, composed of logs stuck upright in the ground and rising to a height of twelve or fifteen feet, with a space of about six feet between the two walls. We threaded our way between thickly crowded and low-built native houses, all apparently deserted, till we came to a comparatively open space, where the chief and a few of his followers were awaiting our arrival.

The chief, Ongeli by name, a big upstanding man, stood on the farther side of the open space, which was enclosed by native huts. Solomon Islanders vary both in type and colour, those on Choiseul Island being quite black, completely distinct in character from the natives of the more eastern portions of the group, who are chocolate-brown in colour. Ongeli, when I first saw him, looked very fierce indeed. He carried a musket which, I have no doubt, he would have been quite ready to use had we developed any hostile intentions. His supporters were of similar type to himself, but generally inferior in physique and bearing to their chief. All were armed with axes and shields.

Ongeli preserved his grim, forbidding-looking appearance until we got quite close to him. We, on our part, advanced with our hands open, palms turned outwards, to show that we were unarmed and friendly. When we arrived within a few yards of the group Ongeli recognized Mr. Goldie, who was in advance, and his features relaxed. Coming towards us, he shook the missionary by the hand. I was then introduced and given an equally friendly greeting.

From out of the huts and from behind them there immediately streamed the whole population of the village. They displayed the utmost curiosity concerning us. Our clothes, the colour of our skins, my wrist-watch, and everything I had was examined with minute interest.

Our time was short, and presently Mr. Goldie asked that we might be allowed to inspect the village. Before our tour, however, Ongeli introduced me to his wife and his son, together with some of his leading men. We then formed a procession and visited the chief's hut and some of the other dwellings.

The huts of Ongeli's tribe were of one general type, though that of the chief himself was larger than the rest and occupied a superior site. It was situated on the highest ground, and when the rain falls, even during the most torrential downpour, the floor of the hut keeps quite dry because the natural drainage of the ground is all away from it. The floor was of beaten earth, and the roof and walls were made from the leaves of the pandanus palm, which is most suitable for keeping out the rain and the heat of the sun. There is ample ventilation for the huts through the interstices of the leaves.

The interiors of the dwellings are dark, there being no windows. Each hut measures about sixteen feet by eight, and there is only one room, in which the whole family lives. The beds are made of native palm leaves laid on a sort of wooden bench raised a little from the floor. The boards composing this bench are generally cut from the betel-nut palm, which splits clean for a great length. The curved side of the wood is usually turned upwards, but the native skin is not unduly sensitive, and they do not appear to suffer any discomfort when lying on the uneven surface. Sometimes the floors of the houses are made from the same kind of wood.

Some of the huts, which did not occupy such excellent sites as that of the chief, were

raised from the ground either by being built on upright logs or on cairns of stones, the object being to prevent the floors getting wet during the rainy weather. Other houses, too, had a kind of veranda, approached by means of a rough ladder made of logs.

The village was not laid out on any system; the houses were just planted in any position their builders fancied, and there were no streets.

I was able to learn a little of the village life, and I gathered that the natives maintain a good standard of morality. Even the chief has but one wife, though, theoretically, there is nothing to prevent him having as many as he can afford. Any moral lapse is

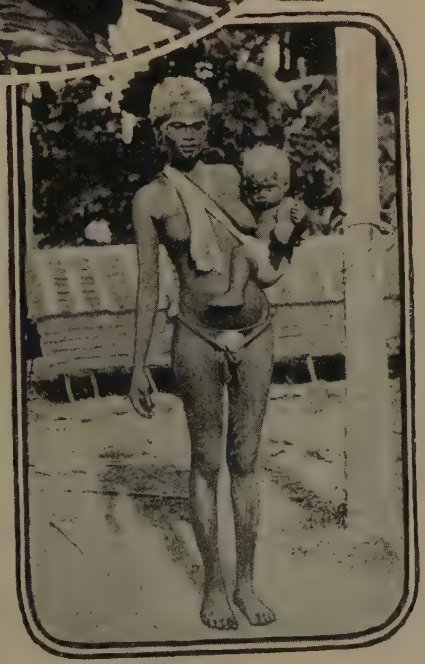
An armed sentinel on the look-out.

A native paddler.

treated with great severity under the extremely strict tribal laws.

I noticed that every man was armed all the time with a loaded musket or with shield and spear, or a tomahawk. They never laid their weapons aside for a single moment. Even the little girls and boys, returning laden with vegetables or canes full of water from the gardens, carried axes as a matter of course.

Through Mr. Goldie's persuasions and the good offices of the native missionary who resided in the village, I was able to take a number of photographs of groups of natives, including the warriors and groups of women and girls. To my great disappointment, however, the black boy who carried my camera fell into a swamp as we were returning to the shore, and every film was spoiled. Though I developed some of them afterwards they were too indistinct to give good results in reproduction.



A native woman and child. Notice the painted designs on their faces.

The last picture I took was one of the village gate, from a point below the crest of the hill. A number of warriors stood on the steep path leading up to the stockade entrance while I was taking the photograph. Not a single one of these people, by the way, had ever been photographed before, and none of them had ever seen or heard of a camera. It is interesting to me to think that I was absolutely the first person to take photographs of the primitive Choiseul folk and their secret stronghold.

The incident of photographing the group at the gate came very near ending disastrously for me, owing to the ill-timed enthusiasm of an ancient gentleman with wild fuzzy hair. This worthy possessed a musket, and insisted on placing himself in the foreground of the picture.

"Old Father Time," as I irreverently dubbed him, was a wicked old savage, who had undoubtedly killed and eaten scores of men in his day, and even now probably partakes of human flesh occasionally. "Father Time" stood in a crouching attitude, with his musket pointed in my direction, and during the inevitable delay of fixing the focus and timing he got worked up to such a pitch of excitement that he began to slither up and down on his skinny old knees, while his black lips receded from his betel-stained teeth and the whites of his eyes gleamed more prominently every moment. Even when I had taken the picture he was reluctant to relax, and it was not until I picked up my camera and threatened him with the packing-case on which I had balanced it that he turned away and stalked off. Walking over to him I took his musket out of his hand. There was a cartridge in the breech, and the trigger was at full cock! I have since thought that I had a very narrow escape.

They are a wild lot, these natives. When visiting them one is rather inclined to treat their suspicion and display of weapons as a joke, hardly realizing that it is no "play-acting" but the real thing, for these people go in daily and hourly fear of attack by the neighbouring tribe, who have sworn to exterminate them and have made many attempts to do so.

That the fears of Ongeli's people concerning their rivals, whose chief was named Leleboe (pronounced Lillyboy), were not without good foundation will appear from the following account of events which had happened in the previous October (1919). Ongeli's tribe had been for a long time engaged in almost continuous warfare with Leleboe's. The latter, early in 1918, raided Ongeli's village and caused many casualties. Mr. Goldie, in the mission schooner *Tandanya*, arrived in the middle of the battle, and gallantly hurried ashore and endeavoured to stop the fighting. He had himself counted thirty-six corpses—men, women, and children. This fight occurred only two hundred yards from where we had landed.

After that conflict there followed an uneasy period of wary watching, culminating in a return raid by Ongeli's people, who were now entrenched in the fortified village of Ginjapili. As we saw, the defences were of an elaborate character. Not only were there double stockades surrounding it, but, on the slopes and entirely encircling the hill, were deep pits, set at the bottom with sharpened stakes, the tops cunningly screened by foliage.

Notwithstanding these defences, however, in the soft darkness before the dawn one hot, still morning, Leleboe's savage warriors crept up through the rank undergrowth and surrounded the hill on which lay the sleeping village. It happened that, all unsuspicious of danger, two or three of the children, having swept their parents' huts, came and unbarred the narrow gate of the stockade and sleepily staggered forth to deposit the rubbish outside, as was their custom.

Here was Leleboe's opportunity! Swiftly changing the plan he had prepared of making a simultaneous attack from all sides, he rushed through the open gateway with a dozen of his followers. Now Mr. Goldie had, as his native missionary, planted in this wild spot a "boy" from Kulambangra named Joni Hopa. It was the custom of this black teacher to hold *lotu* (religious service) at dawn in the little leaf mission-house. Leleboe was aware of this custom, and, believing that the principal natives would be gathered in the village church, he and his savage tribesmen dashed up to the building and fired through the frail walls of leaf.

It chanced, however, that on this morning, of all others, Joni Hopa, the teacher, was ill, and no service was being held. Consequently the furious rush of the enemy and the wild volley of shots that they had fired were observed by the already awakened villagers, who grimly watched the enemy's actions through the peep-holes in their huts. The crash and the smoke of Leleboe's volley had barely died away when there followed another crash from the concealed guns of Ongeli's men, and Leleboe fell with a shattered thigh; four of his men also dropped. The remainder, though taken completely by surprise, rallied sufficiently to snatch up their leader and stumble with him through the entrance to the stockade and down the slippery path leading to the jungle. Here, hurriedly laying their chief down in the dense undergrowth and covering him with branches, they left him and joined the mad flight of their comrades, who had been seized with panic at the fall of their leader.

In hot pursuit came the defenders, whooping and yelling in triumph as they plunged down the slopes of the hill and through the steaming jungle. Presently two of the searchers came across the wounded Leleboe, lying grim and motionless, with shattered thigh-bone, in his hastily constructed hiding-place. His shrift was short, in spite of the entreaties of Joni Hopa; one of the defenders raised his axe and split Leleboe's skull right across. I am able to describe the wound with such precision because we brought away with us the skull of the chief, and the fracture was there for anyone to see. I also secured the very axe with which the blow was struck, and, in addition, I obtained the rifle Leleboe carried, which dropped from his hands as he fell.

Off the coast of Choiseul.

A warrior with tomahawk and shield.

Type of Choiseul Islander.

Choiseul beach.

The defenders would not have sustained a single casualty had not five women of the village, terrified by the sudden attack, dashed out of the stockade towards the vegetable gardens. Being overtaken by the fleeing enemy, they were promptly killed in revenge for the defeat.

According to tribal etiquette it was now "up to" Leleboe's people to revenge their repulse and the death of their chief, and it will be readily understood why, in these circumstances, Ongeli's tribe deemed it necessary to keep their defences in good repair and to go about all the time fully armed and ready to meet the return attack which they realized was bound to come.

Ongeli was so pleased with his victory over Leleboe that he could not refrain from telling me, through Joni Hopa, all he knew of the attack, and he furthermore insisted, as a token of his regard, on presenting me with the skull and weapons of the deceased chief. When we left the village we were under the care of a friendly armed guard provided by Ongeli, and one of the members of this guard carried the skull in triumph on the end of a spear at the head of the procession.

Our return journey was quite uneventful. Instead of the invisible scouts who had watched our arrival and tracked us along the path, we had now a visible bodyguard. Our way led downwards, and we had to be careful not to slide off the slippery trunks of the trees which at intervals performed the duty of bridges. It was very dark towards the end of our journey, and we were glad to see the light of the brilliant tropical stars as we passed once more out into the open and boarded our schooner, tired out but pleased with the accomplishment of our object. The natives gave us a friendly farewell when we left them on the beach—quite a different attitude from that manifested towards us when we had first landed.

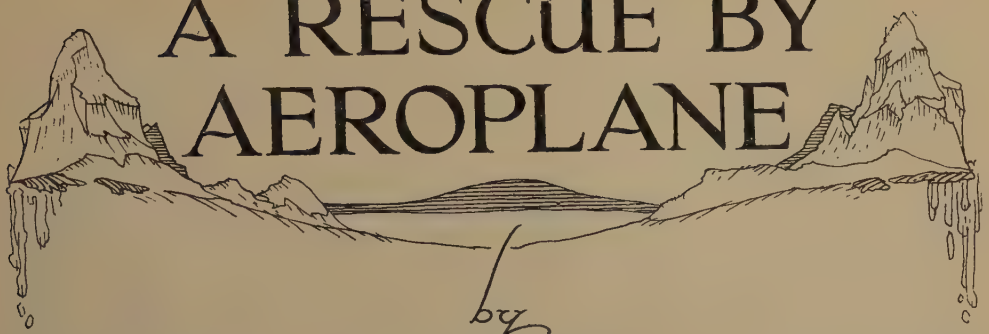
And now for the sequel!

I took the presents Ongeli had given me, including the grim relic of Leleboe, to my own island of Laumona, which is off the coast of Southlands. Some weeks afterwards I was asked to meet the Deputy Commissioner of the Solomon Islands. From him I learnt that Leleboe's people, when they heard that their chief's skull had been given to a white visitor, were so incensed that they promptly planned and carried out another attack on Ongeli. This was the beginning of such serious warfare among the natives of Choiseul that the Government had to step in and put a stop to it. I was requested to return the skull, the cause of all the trouble, to Leleboe's tribe, but I protested that such a procedure would not be fair. Ongeli, I pointed out, was the proper person to whom to return it, and then the skull could be buried again with the rest of the skeleton. This view was accepted by the authorities, and by this time Leleboe's remains probably lie complete in their grave in the centre of the stronghold of Ginjapili.

A BAMBOO ORGAN.

THE photograph here reproduced shows a wonderful bamboo organ in the Catholic church of Los Pinas, a little town about five miles from Manila, in the Philippine Islands. This organ was built about 1818 by an old Spanish priest, who must have been an extremely patient and devoted worker, as he used over nine hundred lengths of bamboo in the organ, every one of which was buried in the sand for at least two years in order to season it. Strange to say, although bamboo is a very soft wood, the old priest did his work so well that the organ is still in good condition after a century of use, and is used every week in his services by the Belgian priest in charge, Father Victor Declereq. Every part of the instrument is made of bamboo, and some very ingenious devices were included by its builder, who must have found his work a labour of love indeed. While making this larger organ, the old Spaniard built a tiny model, a perfect copy of the big instrument. This he sent to the then Queen of Spain, who, in appreciation of this unique present, sent a number of valuable gifts to the Church. Some of them still remain, and are almost as much treasured as the organ itself.

A RESCUE BY AEROPLANE



by

Capt. M. H. Albert

ILLUSTRATED BY E. VERPILLEUX

Pioneers of a proposed aerial route to James Bay, in the far north of Canada, flying over hundreds of miles of wild and uninhabited country, Capt. Albert and his companion had the misfortune to crash into a frozen lake, losing their machine and all their food. Thereafter adventures followed thick and fast, until they were finally discovered, in dramatic fashion, by another aeroplane.

I HARDLY know how to begin to relate the chapter of experiences, bordering close on tragedy, that befell Major Connor and myself in the early spring of 1922. To leave a comfortable fireside for an extended aeroplane trip over the frozen wastes of Northern Quebec and Ontario when the thermometer is away down in the " zeros " is an episode in itself. When this is followed by a crash into an icy lake far from civilization; a swim of three hundred yards through broken ice and water infested with beavers and musk-rats; being forced to hunt for every morsel of food; a fight with a grizzly bear and the rescue of an aged Indian woman who was lost herself, it sounds like the synopsis of a sensational novel, and had I not been one of the participants I might have doubted the authenticity of the story. The strangest thing of all, perhaps, is that the Major and myself are alive to narrate our adventures.

We had both seen considerable active service on many battle-fronts with the British Air Services, and this fact caused us to be chosen by a number of leading financial and business men to undertake an experimental trip by aeroplane from Hamilton, Ontario, to Moose Factory, on James Bay, which is at the southern end of Hudson Bay. The distance by road—that is by train, sled, and canoe—is approximately eight hundred miles, and takes from five to seven weeks one way, whereas by air it is only six hundred miles and should be covered in about six hours. The promoters of the company were promised the mail contract by the Dominion Government, and had also made tentative arrangements with three large fur houses to bring their trappers' catches out to civilization. There were many other likely sources of revenue, such as the delivery of commodities and clothing to the Hudson Bay Company's posts; the conveying of prospectors to the new mining fields at Point Comfort, and the carrying of missionaries to their districts. The details of the company's activities had been worked out thoroughly on paper, and it only remained for us to give the scheme a practical test to complete the organization of the concern.

We were given *carte blanche* to select the 'plane most suitable for the trip, and after inspecting many machines we decided on a land aeroplane with a 110 h.p. engine. The country to be traversed was heavily wooded and rocky, and had a network of rivers and small lakes. In order to eliminate the danger of crashing into the water, we had two small floats attached to the undercarriage, thus making the machine an amphibian. There were two seats and sufficient room to carry five hundred pounds of merchandise in addition to our fuel and food for the round trip. We took on a special consignment of commodities and medical supplies, and three bags of mail, and, after assuring ourselves of the reliability of the engine, announced our readiness to leave as soon as possible.

Our send-off was in the nature of a ceremony. It was a bright, crisp day in March when we " took off " from Burlington Bat, Hamilton. There was much handshaking and congratulating, amid a galaxy of " movie " cameras, and when we finally opened out our engine to " full throttle " there was loud cheering. We circled over the crowd and then struck off along the coast of Lake Ontario to Toronto.

After passing over the business section of Toronto we headed due north, a following wind of twenty knots adding to our speed. We kept to a railway line for nearly two

hundred miles and then, passing over the small settlement of Thorncliffe, left the tracks and headed across wild, rocky, and uninhabited territory. After flying for another hour we noticed that the breeze that had been following and helping us had now become a head-wind, constantly increasing in velocity and gustiness. There was also a touch of snow in the air, and dark clouds began to appear on the horizon. We were flying at five thousand feet and were beginning to feel the effects of the cold. We ate our refreshments, had a hot drink, and felt somewhat better, but as we flew on we saw the clouds lowering and increasing in density. Occasionally we passed through snow-flurries that pitted our faces and made observation through the wind-shields impossible.

We passed over Lake Temiscamingue, and marked it on our chart, and then headed for Lake Abitibi. It was our intention to veer slightly north-west after crossing Lake Abitibi and to follow the Abitibi River to Moose Factory, but upon closer observation of the country we decided to keep farther east, where there appeared to be more small lakes which would offer better landing facilities in case of a forced descent.

As we struggled on against the wind the country began to get bleaker, and was covered with snow. Once, while we were gliding down lower to avoid a heavy bank of snow-clouds, we thought we heard a dog bark, but as we could not see any sign of habitation we concluded that it was either a wild animal or a dog belonging to some wandering Indians. We now observed for the first time that the lakes were frozen over. Those farther south had been partly open, with thin ice at the sides, and we began to wonder what would happen if we were compelled to land on the ice. The only open rivers were the ones that had rapids, and we knew that to land in the rapids meant certain death by drowning. I watched constantly for a field or an open stretch that would afford a safe landing space, but there was not a cleared patch visible in the whole expanse of country below us.

We had now been in the air a little over four hours and considered that we should soon be sighting Lake Abitibi on the north-west. A few minutes later we saw a large sheet of water to the north-east, and conjectured that it was Lake Abitibi, blaming our compass for a deviation. We struck farther east to allow for the error, and twenty minutes later passed over the frozen lake, which we duly marked on our chart. We were now at a height of two thousand feet and were obliged to fly through many small banks of clouds to keep our altitude. The snow-flurries had increased in violence with the sharp wind, and we were now feeling the stress of the trip and the inclement weather.

"There was a sickening thud, and I thought we were going to

We had hardly passed over the lake when Major Boyd, who had relieved me at the control wheel, pointed to the north-east and shouted something about "James Bay." We considered that as soon as we had passed over Lake Abitibi we should be able to see the lower apex of the Bay, if the visibility was favourable, and we were greatly cheered at sighting our objective. We were beginning to think of a warm fire and a flattering reception, when suddenly our engine commenced to splutter and miss fire, and finally stopped altogether!

I took over control immediately, pushing the nose of the machine down so that we would keep our air speed. While on the

first part of the glide I did everything possible to get the engine running again, but when I decided that this was hopeless I began to look around for the best landing-place. There was not a very good radius of glide, as we were only flying at eighteen hundred feet when the engine stopped, but I had confidence that we should be able to land on a small frozen lake directly beneath us.

the bottom, but luckily the 'plane slid for almost sixty yards."

I hardly knew just what would happen when we struck the ice. At first I thought that the impact would break the crust and hold us firm, but then it occurred to me that if we made a graceful landing we might slide for a great distance and perhaps pile the machine up on the rocky shore. I manœuvred the machine to the best of my ability so as to strike the lake at the southern end and allow for a fairly good run along the eastern shore. When within a hundred feet of my objective, however, I noticed several tall trees lining the bank, and almost at the last minute I was obliged to bank my port wing over slightly to avoid striking a lofty pine. In doing so, my starboard wing caught some branches of another pine-tree, and the machine dropped heavily to the lake.

There was a sickening thud, and I thought we were going straight to the bottom, but luckily the 'plane slid for almost sixty yards, ripping sheets of ice up in several places. We prepared to jump out, but on second thoughts decided to wait a moment in order to make sure that the ice would support us. We were about to discuss our plight, thinking the machine was coming to rest, when all at once it took a sudden drop and began to sink.

Instantly we jumped out into the water and thereby escaped certain death by drowning, for we had hardly got clear of the 'plane when it turned on its side and the fuselage sank beneath the surface.

Both of us were now struggling in the water. Major Connor endeavoured to climb on to the ice, but the impact of the machine had cracked it badly, and it broke away directly he touched it. As for me, I began swimming towards what I thought was a small rocky island covered with straw and weeds. When I endeavoured to clamber up I was suddenly met by a dozen or more large musk-rats; what I had thought to be an island was nothing but their winter quarters, and they evidently resented my intrusion.

Turning round I struck out for the shore, but to my disgust felt the rats swimming about my legs. This unnerved me and, being weakened by the trip and the crash, I began to wonder if I should ever reach the shore. However, I continued swimming, and was about to climb to the edge of the ice that skirted the shore-line when some big creature struck me full in the stomach. The blow almost knocked me back beneath the surface of the water, and putting my hand down I felt some large animal. I did not know until afterwards that it was a beaver, but I saw several more before I reached the shore. I managed to get on to the ice, though I fell through several times before I reached a cake that would support

me, and I finally scrambled ashore in an exhausted condition. All this time I had not seen anything of Major Connor. I had no fears concerning him, as I knew him to be a capital swimmer and felt certain that he would reach the shore in safety.

As soon as I was able to get on my feet I searched the opposite bank of the lake and

The Author, Capt. M. H. Albert.

presently observed Major Connor, with a large stick in his hand, raised above his head as if ready to strike. I tried to discover what it was that he was attacking, but could see nothing. I shouted again and again, but apparently he was too busy to hear me.

Some danger evidently threatened him, and so I started out round the south shore-line to help him. On my way I secured a strong stick, and by cutting across the ice at the end of the lake I saved much time. I was unable to see Connor now, as the contour of the land shut him from my view, but when about half a mile from where I figured he was I heard him shouting my name. I promptly started running, but, being in a weakened condition, was unable to make much headway over the rough, frozen ground. When I finally caught sight of him I saw to my horror that he was lying on the ground, with a huge black bear standing over him! I shouted my loudest—half in terror and half in an endeavour to frighten the animal. The bear turned round, stepped back a few paces, and then surveyed me. Connor seized the opportunity to jump to his feet, while I sprang behind a big tree.

"When he attacks me hit him across the head from behind!" I shouted to Connor, without taking my eyes off the bear.

Meanwhile the animal looked from Connor to me, and then back at Connor, uncertain whom to attack first. He made a movement towards Connor, and then suddenly turned and rushed at me. Connor did not lose a second. He darted behind the animal and brought his stick down across the bear's head with every ounce of strength in his body. The animal gave a wild growl, and shook its head frantically from side to side. Coming from behind the tree I gave it another blow across the head, and this time the brute rolled over in the snow apparently stunned.

"Let's get out of this!" panted Connor. "Its mate is bound to be in the vicinity."

We did not know where we were going; our only desire was to put as much space

Major Griff Connor at James Bay.

between the bear and ourselves as possible. We struck off in a direction that we thought would bring us out to James Bay, thinking that once we got there we should be able to walk along the shore-line until we came across some settler or Indian.

We had not gone more than half a mile when we heard a slight noise to our immediate right. We both stopped and glanced around. Looking over to where the sound came from, we observed three small bears playing beside what was apparently their winter home. We concluded that the spell of warm weather we had heard about prior to leaving Hamilton had brought the bear out of its winter quarters, its cubs following.

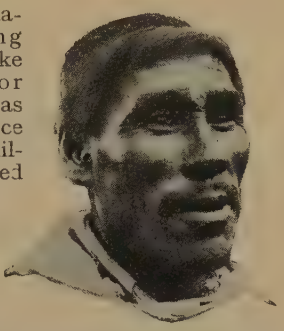
Returning to the opposite side of the lake, to the point where I had first reached the shore, we began to take stock of our position. We had told the directors in Hamilton that as soon as we reached James Bay, or made a landing, we would release a carrier pigeon to tell of our safe arrival. Three hours later, it was arranged, we would release another, and three hours later still a third. We had left with four carrier pigeons, the fourth

bird to be kept to advise the directors when we were leaving for the return trip.

We were now in a serious position, however, for when our machine struck the ice the basket containing the birds was submerged and all of them drowned, so that we were unable to let anyone know of our plight. We talked the matter over and came to the conclusion that when no message was received by the directors in Hamilton they would presume that we had come to grief, and would send another machine, already hired in case of necessity, in search of us. After a brief conference we decided that our best plan was to stay near the wrecked 'plane, at any rate for a few days, in the hope of being rescued.

We spent the rest of the day in making a rough shelter of branches, which we covered with snow. Luckily I had a few matches in the waterproof lining of my flying cap, and with these we lighted a fire. We kept the blaze going all night, partly for warmth and partly as a signal, and early next morning we began to build a rough platform over the ice towards the spot where the wing of the sunken aeroplane still showed above the surface of the water. We had not eaten since noon the day before, and we hoped that by getting to the edge of the ice and then making a raft we might be able to rescue some of the food from the machine. Connor mentioned something about eating the bear that had attacked us, but looking out across the lake we could see no signs of it, and concluded that it had recovered from our blows and crawled back to its hole.

All that day and late into the night we worked on our pathway across the ice, praying that the weather would stiffen a little so that the ice would thicken and enable us to reach the machine. The following morning we awoke stiff, cold, and hungry. Connor wanted to give up the idea of reaching the machine, suggesting that we should strike out at once for James Bay. It was now two days since we had left Hamilton, and we figured that if they were going to dispatch a machine at all it would be either on this day or at dawn the following morning. We finally decided to stay at the lake and try to salve some food from the 'plane, hoping in the meantime to be rescued.

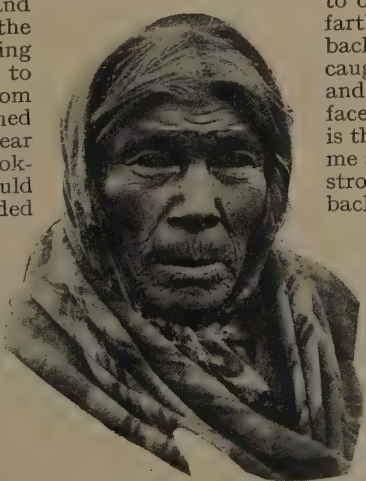


Musktageougi, the Eskimo, who rescued the airmen and the old Indian woman.

The Hudson Bay post at Mattice.

At long last we reached the edge of the ice, and then began to construct a primitive raft, placing logs side by side and intertwining pine-branches to hold them together. Once we reached the 'plane we figured that we could secure ropes and other material that would help us. In fact, we had hopes of hauling the whole machine to shore.

Sitting astride the raft, both of us paddled towards the wreck. It was slow work and our feet soon felt as if they were frozen, but we carried on and finally reached the aeroplane. I grabbed hold of it and was climbing on when suddenly the machine lurched to one side and started sinking farther. I reached out to get back to the raft, but my foot caught in one of the stay wires and I plunged beneath the surface. The next thing I remember is that Connor had a firm grip of me around the neck. He was a strong swimmer and soon had me back on the logs.



The old Indian squaw who was discovered by the airmen.

Cold, hungry, wet through to the skin, and with our last hope gone, we struggled back over the ice to our shelter. All that afternoon we kept the fire going and endeavoured to dry ourselves. We had now decided to start out for James Bay as soon as we had the strength; it was our only hope. Even if a machine came to rescue us the pilot, in all probability, would not

be able to see or hear us, and landing on any of the lakes was impossible.

Late that evening, or it might have been early the next morning—we had no record of time, both our watches having stopped when we first struck the water—we set off in what we thought was a northerly direction. For many hours we plodded on through dense forests of small trees and over rocky stretches. We rested occasionally, but later decided not to stop at all, as it only added to our weakness.

We must have been tramping for about five hours, making very slow progress, when suddenly Connor touched me on the shoulder and ordered me to stop and listen. He pulled his flying cap off and we both stood perfectly still and strained our ears.

Connor told me that he thought he heard a machine, but was puzzled when no further sound came. We continued to stand motionless for a few more moments, and then, sure enough, both of us heard the low hum of an aeroplane engine. There was no mistaking it and we almost wept for joy.

Rushing to an open, rocky stretch we saw the 'plane high above us. Taking off our coats we waved them and shouted ourselves hoarse, although we knew that our voices would not be heard above the noise of the engine. We realized, moreover, that it was doubtful if we should be observed, as the machine was flying at a height of about two thousand feet. Occasionally, however, the engine was shut off and the 'plane circled around to a low altitude in an effort to find us. Our only hope was that she might come near us on one of these low-flying trips.

Presently, directly above where we were still shouting and waving, the machine took a dive, the engine was shut off, and the aeroplane started circling. We concluded that we had been sighted, and were congratulating ourselves, when suddenly the engine was started again and the 'plane made off in a northerly direction. For a moment neither of us spoke; then we realized that our lives were at stake and shouted even harder than we had done before, waving our coats until it seemed that our arms would swing off. The machine kept straight on for a few minutes; then it took a sharp turn and came over our position again. The engine was shut off, and the 'plane circled down until it was only two hundred feet above us. We saw two heads projecting over the side of the fuselage, and two arms waved to us. We had been sighted—we were saved! I think, for a moment, we both collapsed. The engine was started again, and just as the aeroplane was a little to the north of us we observed a big bundle thrown overboard. We endeavoured to note where it dropped and then ran to recover it.

After a search of thirty minutes we found the bundle. On the outside, apparently written in a hurry, was a scribbled note saying that a landing was going to be made at James Bay from whence a party would be sent to rescue us. We opened the parcel and found sufficient food to feed six hungry men, some matches, tobacco, warm clothing, and a big flask of brandy.

We lost no time in having a meal—the first for three days—and then we built a fire, and wrapping ourselves in the warm clothing, slept for several hours.

When I awoke it was dark and the fire had gone out. Connor was still fast asleep. I made up the fire and prepared another meal. Waking Connor, we both ate heartily; then we started off once again for James Bay.

We had not been travelling for more than two hours when we heard a faint shout. We concluded that it was our friends of the rescue party, and hurried in the direction of the call. Several minutes later we came across an old Indian woman who was groping her way through the underbush. When we spoke to her she started and then collapsed. We gave her some brandy and lighted a fire. She soon recovered, but was unable to speak a word of English. An hour later we heard more shouting. The old Indian woman jumped up and shouted back as soon as she heard the calls, and soon afterwards a dog-team, pulling a large sleigh and an Eskimo driver, appeared through the trees.

We discovered that the old woman was almost blind and had been lost for nearly two days. The man with the dog-team had not heard of us or the aeroplane that had come to rescue us, but we all piled on to the sleigh and within four hours were at Moose Factory, where several teams were even then preparing for the trip to rescue us.

We received a great welcome from our comrades and the Eskimos and Indians at Moose Factory. We had a good meal and related our adventure with the bear. Connor wanted to go back and get the cubs, and to this day I think he would have done so if one of the Eskimos had not agreed to give him two in return for the kindness shown to the old Indian woman whom we had helped.

It afterwards transpired that the old Indian woman was being taken by her son on a visit to a distant relative, when the dogs got on thin ice and a few broke through. The son was drowned, but the dogs struggled to shore and made their way back to the post. The old woman had been tipped out and stunned when the sleigh struck a tree.

After much handshaking we departed from Moose Factory the following day. The aeroplane was badly crowded with the six of us—four men and two bears—but we managed to arrive safely at Mattice, the end of the railway line, about five hours later. Here Connor, the bears, and myself decided to take the train, while our companions resumed their trip by air

ENGLAND'S ODDEST TREASURE-TROVE

by

J. Douglas Kerruish

ILLUSTRATED BY PERCY GRAVES

An account of the finding, in very remarkable circumstances, of a vast hoard of gold and silver coins at Seaton Carew, on the Durham coast. Many people, says the Author, know of similar strange "finds," and we shall be pleased to hear from any WIDE WORLD reader who can relate an authentic story of buried treasure brought to light.

WHO does not love a good yarn of buried treasure? Fiction or fact, they have an appeal that is all their own, whether the story concerns a pirate hoard on a Caribbean isle or a casket of jewels behind a secret panel in an ancient British castle. The buried treasures of fact, indeed, are every whit as remarkable as the fictitious ones; the British Isles alone can furnish numerous instances of long-hidden wealth suddenly revealed to clever or lucky folk.

It would be interesting to learn which is the strangest case of the kind on record. Many people who read this narrative, I feel sure, can tell of a similar instance—either a personal experience or one learnt at second-hand—connected with such "finds," great or small. I venture to maintain, however, that the story of the *Little Duck* treasure-trove will take some beating.

As a rule, hidden treasures are usually either sunk or buried, but the hoard I am about to deal with combined the attractions of both modes, for although sunk at sea it was dug up on shore and never seen by mortal eyes between the two happenings.

We speak of money as "tainted" when it has been put to ill uses. If the specie that changes hands in an unholy transaction becomes accursed in itself, then surely certain coins that lie on the desk before me as I write should shine with baleful light at night. Dreadful coins they are, for in the hierarchy of "tainted" money the more familiar "pirate gold" must surely yield pride of infamous place to "slavers' silver"!

Here is the photograph of one of these coins—a fat, heavy, silver dollar, issued by His Most Christian Majesty Carlos IV. of Spain and the Indies, and dated 1796. The last active service it saw was when it helped to buy a soul housed in a black human body. And now for the strange story that lies behind the money.

One of the coins from the *Little Duck* treasure-trove.

On the Durham coast is the village of Seaton Carew, with Hartlepool for its neighbour to the north. Seaton is now becoming an everyday seaside resort, but there are plenty of people still living there who remember it as it was in the days when the treasure-

The front at Seaton Carew as it appeared in 1866, about the time of the recovery of the treasure.

trove was found—a typical English coast village, beautiful in a bleak sort of way.

There are golf-links there now, of course, and the village street has changed into an everyday sort of promenade; but Seaton Carew's marvellous stretch of sands remains unaltered, with the treacherous shallows of the North Sea beyond. These sands and shallows, by the way, have made this as dangerous a spot as any on the map when the north-east gales are sweeping down on Seaton after a clear run from Bergen or the Pole. These storms and shallows and sands, between them, engineered the last act of the "slavers' silver" drama.

Let us regard it as a play in three acts. The first is lost, but research restores its main outlines. The scene is a trim little vessel engaged in the slave-trade, a ship with ample storage capacity for her hapless human cargo and possessing a good turn of speed so as to be able to run away from the watchful British warships that were doing their best to put down the whole dreadful business.

Just how that act ended is not known, but its climax was probably the capture of the slaver and the setting free of poor wretches herded below her hatches.

Act Two introduces us to the erstwhile slave-ship, now called the *Little Duck*. The date is over a century ago, and the *Little Duck* was then a highly respectable trading vessel, using the North Sea for her lawful occasions. The background of this scene is Seaton Carew—sands, shallows, and storm. These three, one terrible night, took hold of the *Little Duck* and between them pounded her to the marine equivalent for a jelly. The sea and "Lloyd's Register" knew the *Little Duck* no more.

The curtain rises on the Third Act after an interval of several reigns. The third and fourth Georges and the fourth William had gone their way, and Victoria had been on the throne for many years. Seaton Carew was then still very much the same as it had been for a century or two. Promenade, bands, pierrots, and trippers were still things of the future; the lonely coastline offered plenty of facilities for romance.

In a cottage near the shore, at some distance from the village, an old woman lived alone. She was in the habit, every now and then, of exchanging an old Spanish coin, gold or silver, at the shops. This proceeding did not excite the attention it would have done in a town; the village had always been a home of seafarers, and the shopkeepers merely supposed that one of the eccentric old dame's ancestors must have left her some savings in that form.

This had gone on for years, and at last we get down to a day in the eighteen-sixties—a day whereon two unemployed workmen of Hartlepool were called by the hope of a job to Middlesbrough. They were utterly "broke," lacking even the modest railroad fare. They must therefore proceed on Shank's ten-toed mare by the shortest route—along the shore.

The previous night had been stormy, and when they reached a lonely stretch not

far from the old lady's abode they found that the ebbing tide had scoured all the sand from the underlying clay, and also from a streak of what looked like black peat. This clay and peat, they noticed, were thickly littered with dirty flat discs. Curious, they examined the discs closely and presently discovered that they were old Spanish silver dollars—silver dollars by the pailful, with here and there a gold doubloon for variety!

They did not fill their pockets, these stone-broke darlings of fortune; they dragged off their overcoats, tied them up into rough sacks, and filled *them*. The sole restriction was the weight they could carry. Staggering home with their precious loads, they raced back with sacks and shovels. The tide had now turned and was coming in fast; but the pair dug and scooped furiously until the whole of their Tom Tiddler's ground was deep under water.

With their second load of treasure they set off for home once more, prepared to return again when the tide had ebbed. Most unfortunately for themselves, however, they stopped at a house of call to "wet" the find for luck. The inevitable happened; the beer that went in pushed out the truth, and the tale of money to be picked up by the sackful went round the neighbourhood like fire in stubble. Evening and ebbtide saw battalions of townsfolk and villagers, equipped with baskets and sacks, rakes and spades, frantically forking up money from the clay and peat. Although they did not know it at the time, they were on board an ancient wreck, for the peat was all that was left of the decayed, ill-fated *Little Duck*.

Miss Isabel Eleanor Kell, a surviving eye-witness of the remarkable scenes that took place when the treasure was dug up.

The rest of the story can be set down from the sober evidence of actual eye-witnesses. That patch of beach was a veritable coin-mine; the money could be picked up by hand from the looser clay, or spaded up from the peat beneath. The black smears seen on the dollar here reproduced are some of this hardened peat. The total value of the *cache* could never be ascertained, but many of those who were first on the spot lived in comfort for life as a result. Surviving spectators tell vivid stories of the scenes that took place for many days. Every ebbtide found armies of treasure-seekers waiting to swarm out on to the enchanted ground as soon as the water was low enough to permit it. At night, in particular, the sands resembled a mile-long fair ground, ablaze with lanterns and bonfires by whose light the digging went on.

The first to come, of course, skimmed the cream of the treasure, and tales are told of hampers, buckets, and washing-baskets full of money stored in cottages. For a week or more, however, the quarrying went on so profitably that shops in the village and Hartlepool found it worth while to put up notices: "*Spanish dollars changed here.*"

The parade at Seaton Carew at the present time.

The explanation of the whole remarkable affair was worked out between the old lady who had had the first slender pickings and

"At night the sands resembled a fair-ground, ablaze with lanterns and bonfires."

the village elders whose memory went back to the beginning of the century. The old dame confessed that after storms she used to examine the shore for coins washed out of the clay, and always picked up enough to live on until the next scouring-out of a fresh supply. Now wrecks are such a commonplace of Seaton Carew—four have been piled up off the village at the same time—that only very important ones are honoured by a precise date in local memory. After much cogitation, however, it brought to mind that a few decades before a ship called the *Little Duck* had been wrecked at that exact spot.

Then the unwritten, bewildering mazes of seafaring tradition were ransacked, and the annals of sea-scandal eventually gave up the *Little Duck's* variegated history.

It was discovered that the prosaically-named ship was a lady with a past; she had answered to other designations in her time and sailed under other flags. In one of her previous incarnations she had dabbled in the slave-trade before she was seized, sold, and finally fell into honest hands.

That she had been captured and confiscated was the obvious explanation of why her slave-dealer's ill-gotten hoard had been left in its secret hiding-place somewhere in the hull, quite unknown and unsuspected by her later owners and crews. When wrecked she had settled deep into the clay between tide-marks. Her rotted timbers gradually came apart, working ever deeper into the clay, and finally turned to a kind of peat. In this way the treasure was spilt under the surface and preserved until Providence at length revealed it to the two lucky "hard-ups."

EXPLORING IN CENTRAL BRAZIL

by

L. Marsden Smith

ILLUSTRATED BY ARCH. WEBB

A vividly written account of the adventures of a small expedition which left England in 1921 to explore the mighty Amazon forests, still practically unknown, and study the manners and customs of the wild Indian tribes who have their homes in those well-nigh inaccessible areas. Stay-at-home readers can have no conception of the difficulties and dangers entailed in such a journey, but Mr. Marsden Smith's narrative will enable them to understand something of the hardships and perils of the quest and the lure of the unknown, which constantly spurs the pioneer onwards.

I.

OUR expedition, consisting of my brother, Mr. S. Reginald Smith, Mr. Robert Hall, and myself, left Barry Docks on January 14th, 1921, on board the R.M.S. *Anselm*, our immediate destination being Manaos, nearly a thousand miles up the Amazon River.

Our plans were to make for a tributary of the mighty river and from there branch off to a smaller river still, finally entering the forests to examine and explore the interior, where we hoped to meet some of the wild Indian tribes and study their lives and habits.

Our equipment consisted of a special insect-proof tent, axes, knives, Winchester ·44 rifles, revolvers, air-rifles, shot-guns, and a supply of ammunition calculated to last for two years. Most of our stores were compressed in water-tight cases, and we also carried packets of seeds to plant on our way in, so that on the return journey we should be sure of obtaining fresh vegetables. A large selection of "trade" articles, such as necklaces, mirrors, rings, knives, needles, cotton, and so on, was taken to be used as presents to the Indians. A very efficient medicine chest of special construction was also carried, complete with compressed drugs and minor surgical instruments.

Arriving in Manaos on February 7th, after a pleasant voyage, we completed our arrangements and added further small items to our equipment. Much kindness was shown us by the British community there; we also gleaned interesting information regarding other expeditions that had passed through Manaos on their way to the interior.

The usual rumours were prevalent with regard to happenings in the wilds, the most humorous being a tale concerning an expedition which had penetrated into Northern Brazil, where a tribe of almost white-skinned cannibals seven feet high had been encountered, the explorers escaping after a running fight lasting two days and nights.

We eventually left Manaos on February 21st on a small river-boat, bound for the south of the state of Amazonas *viâ* the River Purus. The voyage in these small steamers along the Amazon and its tributaries is very pleasant and interesting, and even the most *blasé* travellers cannot fail to be impressed by the tropical magnificence of the vegetation and the vast extent of the waters. The River Purus is two thousand three hundred miles long from its source to where it joins the main Amazon; many tributaries feed it, some of them very large, and these in turn are fed by innumerable smaller rivers and *igarapes* which drain the forest by a vast network of channels.

The banks of the Purus reveal a wonderful panorama of tropical vegetation, with mighty towering trees of many varieties,

These vast undulating tracts of virgin forest are a never-ending attraction; they seem to breathe mystery and the spell of the unknown. What secrets, one wonders, lie hidden in their dim interior?

Brilliantly plumaged birds were everywhere — pure white egrets, wild duck, gorgeous-coloured parrots, and innumerable other species. Dotted at rare intervals along the river are the residences of the proprietors of the land adjoining — *seringals* or stations where rubber is warehoused. Here and there native huts are also seen, the homes of half-breed civilized Indians known as *Caboclos*.

Indian paddlers on the river.

Arriving at Bocca do Acre—the mouth of the River Acre—we transferred to a smaller shallow-draught steamer propelled by a paddle-wheel at the stern, and in this vessel entered the Acre, which leads through wild forest in the territory of Acre and thence to its source on the border-line of Bolivia. About half-way up this river was the area that we proposed to enter, and from this point we intended to gradually work east into the vicinity of the River Madeira, which we meant to cross if possible.

As it happened, however, the Purus was in flood, miles of country inland being inundated to a depth of many feet. Its tributaries were also in the same condition, and in consequence the half-breed native rubber-collectors were reduced to a state of partial starvation.

The floods had swept away their huts and ruined their crops, causing much hardship and suffering. Very little fish could be obtained, fish always being scarce in flood seasons. These adverse conditions were rendered worse by the bad state of the rubber trade throughout Brazil, and altogether the outlook for our journey was none too promising.

Our stern-wheel steamer, the *Olinda*, was bound for Empreza with a general cargo of foodstuffs, and at three o'clock in the morning a *seringal* called Redempcao was reached. At this point the river is bounded by high

A group of Ipurinas Indians. The Author is seen in the background.

Pigmy Indians of the forest.

clay banks. A rifle was fired in the air—the usual method of informing a steamer at night that a station desired to communicate. The *Olinda* replied with a blast of the siren to show that she had received the signal and was stopping.

THE HUNGER-PIRATES.

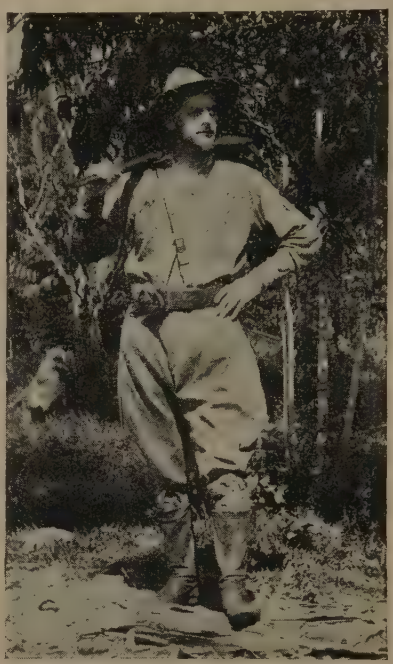
Suddenly, without warning, a perfect hail of bullets struck the ship! The helmsman left the wheel and threw himself flat on the deck, and the vessel, with considerable way on her, struck the bank on the starboard side with a terrific crash, embedding her bows firmly in the clay. The noise was now terrific; above the smashing of glass and the roar of escaping steam could be heard the fearful yells of a mob of Caboclo natives. Within a few seconds the stranded ship was swarming with them.

Armed with rifles and revolvers, formidable bush knives, and sticks, they commenced to loot the cargo, all the while keeping up their yelling. Their appearance—half-naked, dishevelled, wild-eyed, and hunger-mad—plainly showed that they were desperate and would brook no resistance. One of the bullets they fired, piercing through three partitions, finished by striking the depression caused by the sleeping form of Mr. Robert Hall on the under-side of a steel spring mattress—a very narrow escape. A second bullet entered the same cabin and struck the bulkhead a few inches above my brother's head. Other passengers also had close shaves, as did the ship's officers. The captain and all on board speedily realized that it was impossible to prevent the natives carrying out their designs, as the slightest sign of resistance would have been the signal for a volley of bullets from the pitch darkness of the forest into the brilliantly lighted river-boat.

An Indian village.

The mob systematically unloaded the cargo, leaving practically nothing. We were very anxious lest they should commandeer the passengers' luggage as well, for this calamity would have ended our expedition then and there.

The *Commandante* rose to the occasion, haranguing the ring-leaders and pointing out that they had made a very good haul. They must not, however, he insisted, molest the passengers or their luggage, and after some argument they agreed to leave us and our belongings alone. In two hours they had unloaded the whole of the cargo, and then a further dispute took place as to our destination. The Caboclos insisted on our proceeding with the voyage, whilst the *Commandante* was equally determined to return, and eventually carried his point. Backing out from the bank, the ship headed for Bocca do Acre once more, followed by triumphant yells from the Caboclos.



The Author, Mr. L. Marsden Smith.

Our plans being all upset by this unforeseen incident, we decided to purchase a large canoe before reaching Hyutanahan and prepare to make a fresh start from that point. Owing to the larger type of canoe being scarce, we were obliged to take an old and leaky craft, but with much caulking and patching we made it fit to carry our equipment.

Meanwhile the steamer company had decided to run another vessel up to Empreza to see if things had now quieted down. She was to carry no passengers or cargo and was protected by barricades.

The Captain-Superintendent, who was on board, offered to allow us to complete our voyage on the vessel if we cared to go at our own risk. So, transferring our equipment and canoe to the steamer, we again left for our original destination.

During the voyage, at three o'clock in the morning, the *Nictheroy* steamed into a blinding tropical rain-storm. The pilot, unable to see ahead, promptly rang the engines to "stop," but too late to prevent the vessel running with a crash into the flooded forest.

The concussion threw us out of our bunks, but fortunately did no damage to the hull. We backed out of the trees and proceeded, and, an hour later, passed without molestation the scene of the previous raid.

Arriving at Empreza (Rio Branco) we were introduced to the Mayor, the Captain of the Port, and other residents, who were much interested in our expedition. The canoe repairs being now completed, we were ready to start into the interior. We failed at first to find any natives willing to accompany us, but eventually a number agreed to go half the distance.

A BAD START.

Early next morning we made a start up an *igarape*, or watercourse, but after a few miles the winding channel became exceptionally difficult, waterweeds, hanging lianas, and floating logs continually checking our progress. Hacking away at the obstructions with large bush knives and axes, slashing and cutting constantly to right and left, we were only able to proceed a few yards at a time. After some hours of this exhausting progress an effort was made to travel overland. The canoe was secured to a tree, and we began our tramp through the undergrowth, but swamps—dark, slimy, and alive with insect life of all descriptions—blocked our way in every direction, and finally we had to return to the canoe and make another effort to push forward.

Here again, however, disappointment awaited us, and presently it became evident that neither by land nor water was entry into the forest interior possible at this point. Reluctantly we put about for the return journey.

During a trip up these *igarapes*, or smaller rivers, a constant watch has to be maintained both on the low floating grasses and the overhanging trees for snakes. A type frequently met whilst in the forests and on the rivers was a small but deadly tree-climbing member of the viper family, commonly known by the natives in Brazil as the *Jararaca*. A canoe passing under or brushing past branches is always liable to disturb one of these venomous little brutes, and they attack on the slightest provocation. They are excellent swimmers, and quite at home either in the water or on land.

We now headed the canoe into the swift-

flowing stream of the River Acre, determined to make a further attempt by way of a larger *igarape* farther north. The journey down the Acre was one of continuous interest, and we found many valuable mineral deposits, specimens of which we brought home.

Game was very scarce, and, when shot, recovery was difficult and sometimes impossible owing to the thickness of the undergrowth.

One thing that impressed me on this journey was the endurance shown by our native paddlers, who never seemed to tire.

TRIBAL CURSES.

One day we came across a native medicine-man, or *pajé*. Every Indian tribe has its medicine-man, who performs all the religious rites and ceremonies, heals the sick, and bestows the curses of the tribe on anyone incurring their hatred. This curse is called *arabani*, and every tribe has its own *arabani*, differing in form and effect. We met a half-breed who, we were informed, was suffering from the *arabani* of the Jamamadi Indians. This tribe numbers over two thousand, and inhabits the dense forests between the Rio Purus and the Rio Jurua.

The unfortunate native who was under the curse was very ill and in constant pain. We were informed that he had sent a message to the *pajé* begging him to remove the *arabani*, and we decided to delay our journey in order, if possible, to witness the ceremony, should it take place. It is very difficult for a European to gain admittance to these rites, as the Indians are shy and suspicious of strangers. Owing to our friendship with a half-breed who had some influence with them, however, we managed to arrange matters.

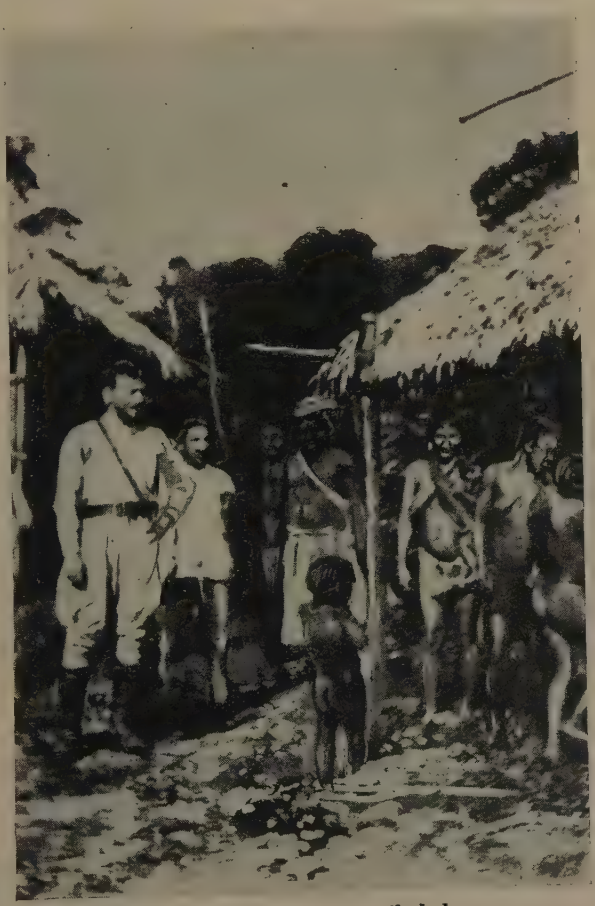
At sunset that evening we were summoned to a rough native hut, and, climbing a crude ladder, entered a bare loft thatched with palm leaves. The sick man lay in the gloomy interior under a dirty covering which protected him from the clouds of mosquitoes. The only light was that of a native oil flare.

A WEIRD CEREMONY.

Squatting round the room were various Indians and half-breeds, all wearing an air of expectancy and awe. A very old Indian woman appeared to be the most disinterested spectator, sitting stolidly in a corner smoking a blackened native pipe. The medicine-man, it appeared, had listened to the sick man's pleadings and was about to commence operations. He signed to us to come under the mosquito covering, and, crawling beneath this, we squatted down Indian-fashion to witness the rites. Baring the legs and thigh of the sick man, the *pajé* bent over him and began to emit weird noises, drawing in his breath and discharging it with coughs and hissings.

Rocking to and fro, he gradually worked himself into a frenzy, his face twitching spasmodically the whole time. Then, with a fearful roar, he sprang forward, his head went down, and he started to bite at the half-breed's flesh.

Crouching like a wild beast over its prey, he lay there for a few minutes, emitting growls and grunts. Suddenly he sprang backwards and, standing up, began to make horrible noises. He ended by coughing into his hand a yellowish crystal stone which all the Indians believed to be part of the *arabani*,



Indians preparing for a tribal dance.

A decidedly uncanny atmosphere pervaded the dim-lit room, and murmurs of approval accompanied the *paje's* feat, which was supposed to denote the removal of the curse.

After a short rest, the medicine-man proceeded to extract more of the *arabani*, and our guide asked us to watch carefully. We bent closer when the performance started again, and I slid my hand to my pocket and quietly extracted an electric torch. When the grunting and frenzied breathing of the witch-doctor had seemingly reached their climax I quickly shone the light on his face and the sick man's leg. The flash startled the *paje*, being the first electric lamp he had ever seen, but all the same he leapt backwards with another portion of the *arabani* extracted.

He then lay down flat to recuperate from his exertions prior to starting again. Our Indian half-breed informed me that these *arabani* stones are deadly to touch, and can only be handled by a medicine-man; anyone else must carry them in a glass bottle. The stone could not, he told us, be placed in a bottle until twenty-four hours had elapsed, as otherwise its latent power would shiver the glass to fragments. I determined to obtain one of these *arabani* stones if possible, and after a lot of persuasion, and the promise of lavish presents, the medicine-man agreed to give me some. I had with me a small empty corked test-tube, which I gave to the *paje* to place the stones in after the lapse of twenty-four hours. He informed us, on delivering them—there were six in all—that we were the only possessors of such stones, and he warned us to guard them well and never touch them, or death would be the result.

I had an opportunity later of questioning and examining the sick man. He was suffering, I discovered, from a number of ulcers—originally small cuts and abrasions which had become inflamed through dirt and lack of attention. He also had a slight touch of malarial fever.

I asked him why the Indians had cursed him, but he refused to answer. He informed me, however, that the medicine-man had told him that the *arabani* had been given to him four times, on each occasion when he was asleep. He was evidently in deadly fear of the Indians, but quite confident that he would speedily recover his health now the *arabani* had been removed.

The influence of the medicine-man is very great amongst the Indians of the interior, their ignorance and superstition endowing him with wonderful and uncanny powers.

Even the "civilized" Indians, on the shores of the large rivers, and sometimes the Brazilians also, are affected by his sinister influence, and fear him and his powers. In some places the medicine-man of a tribe will pay periodical visits to the main rivers, and practise his magic arts in a secluded native hut.

An Indian chief and his family.

THE DEADLY "SURUCUCU."

Returning to our camp after this exhibition by the *paje*, we encountered a *Surucucu* snake, though only a small specimen, about seven feet long. The bite of this snake is invariably fatal, and it holds the honour of being the largest poisonous reptile in the world. It may reach a length of more than twelve feet, and is often over a foot in circumference. A tumbler-full of venom can be extracted from the poison glands supplying the formidable fangs, which, in a full-sized specimen, are quite an inch in length.

The *Surucucu* frequents the

"I let fly the twelve-bore."

margins of rivers, though occasionally we met them in the interior, and it lives on the smaller animals.

As we had been out in the forests for days and were within sight of our camp no one was prepared for this big snake, which was lying in an open space basking in the sun. My brother, Mr. Reginald Smith, almost stepped on the creature as shouts of "Cobra! cobra!" came from the startled Indians. I let fly the 12-bore with a charge of B.B. shot, but the excited Indian boys got in our way and prevented further firing. One threw a tree-felling axe at it, but failed to hit it, and it took refuge in a tree-stump covered with dense undergrowth. We decided to

Indian palm-leaf huts.

smoke it out by lighting fires at various points, but owing to the density of the undergrowth it managed to escape us.

Very commendable was the fearlessness shown on many occasions by the Indians in encounters with these and other venomous reptiles. Almost naked as they are, with little in the way of weapons barring a piece of stick picked up at random, knowing well that one swift dart and bite from the fangs of these loathsome reptiles will be fatal, they invariably give chase and destroy them, thoroughly enjoying the sport notwithstanding the frightful risks entailed. The sight of one of these great *Surucucus*, hideous and yet beautiful in their markings, is sufficient to make one realize what formidable and powerful enemies they are in an encounter.

In connection with snakes the most ridiculous beliefs are held throughout Brazil by the Indians, Caboclo half-breeds, and the Brazilians themselves.

One Indian gravely informed me that to wear the tooth of an alligator round one's waist is a sure safeguard against attack from any snake, whilst an Indian remedy for a snake-bite is to kill the attacking snake and extract a certain portion from the head and another portion from the intestines. The former is immediately eaten ; the latter is rubbed into the laceration made by the snake's fangs. Another remedy is to eat leaves found in the forest which bear similar marks to the skin of a snake. I cannot say that I noticed that either of these remedies was remarkably efficacious !

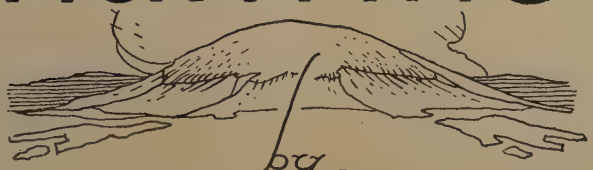
It was about this time that we began to experience our first personal hardships through the recurrent heavy rains ; day and night these continued at short intervals, deluge after deluge. We were constantly wet through, and, suffering torments as we were from the bites of venomous insects, our plight for days together became almost unbearable. Fever also attacked our party, retarding our progress, and as we were travelling light, without proper medical stores, it obtained a hold upon us which it would not otherwise have secured. Under these circumstances our *morale* tended to become very low, while the continuous monotonous roar of the rains, crashing with unbelievable force and noise on the leaves overhead, necessitated our shouting whenever oral communication was desired with another member of the party.

The white members of the expedition—Messrs L. Marsden Smith, Robert Hall, and S. Reginald Smith.

One comfort we had : the previous shortage of meat had now ceased, and every day we had a meat meal of some description provided by our guns. Everything came alike to us, and we discovered that roast or stewed monkey is a very tender and palatable food. The Indians in the interior much esteem it, and the excitement evinced by our boys during the chase of one of these monkeys was wholly due to their pleasant anticipation of seeing it in the stew-pot for the evening meal. Later on we lived on monkey-meat for months.

(*To be continued.*)

BANDIT-HUNTING



by

Capt. George Ash

Illustrated by

R. CATON WOODVILLE

Last month Captain Ash described his remarkable experiences while travelling "Round the World with a Lasso." In this article he sets forth his adventures in Texas, Mexico — where for eighteen months he served under Francisco Villa, the notorious revolutionary leader—and a battle with outlaws in Santo Domingo.

I EARNED my title of Captain while serving in the Texas Rangers. This organization is similar in many respects to the famous North-West Mounted Police of Canada. A Ranger never gives up his gun and fights to the last. Before you can become a member of the corps you must be a crack shot, an expert rider, and an all-round frontiersman.

While with the Rangers I had an exciting time chasing outlaws, rustlers (cattle thieves) and other "bad men." My headquarters were at El Paso, close to the Mexican boundary.

I once caught a desperado through an unexpected meeting with a friend who had gone wrong.

I was riding along one day when I was greeted with the cry: "Hello, George!" It came from a young sun-bronzed Texan, who was sitting by a camp-fire cooking a piece of meat on a stick.

"Hello, pardner!" I replied. "Where have we met before? I don't seem to remember your face."

"Have a good look and guess again," he replied.

I got off my horse and went to the fire and, to my surprise, discovered it was a fellow cowboy, known as "Tex," who had worked with me on a ranch in Montana.

Naturally I was pleased to meet him, though I could not understand what he was doing at this out-of-the-way place. He could give no satisfactory answers to my questions, and when he learnt that I was in the Texas Rangers seemed decidedly nervous. My suspicions were aroused, for I felt instinctively that my former friend was not acting on the square. Presently I detected him trying to hide something under his blanket, and when I asked what it was he replied angrily: "None of your business," and made a move to draw his revolver. But I had him covered before his gun left the holster and, pulling the blanket on one side, saw that it concealed a pair of branding-irons.

"Come on, Tex," I said, "give me the straight goods, and maybe I'll give you a chance." We had always got on well together, and I knew that at heart he was not really bad.

Then he told me that he was "down and out" and was trying to make a living by "rustling" some calves. He confessed that he had captured nine, branded them with the letter "X," and had them hidden in a nearby gully. He further told me that they were intended for a man known as "Gun Bill," who was coming to fetch them that same night.

As it happened, "Gun Bill" was the very man we were seeking just then. He was known to be taking stolen cattle across the border into Mexico, but hitherto all attempts to catch him had failed.

I told "Tex" that if he assisted me in capturing the rustler I would give him a new cowboy outfit and set him on his feet again. He readily agreed to the proposition.

Going to the nearest telegraph-post, I scaled it with the help of my climbing irons,

and by means of the portable telegraph outfit I carried sent a message to Globe for help. Some hours later four of our men came galloping up.

We hid in a nearby ravine while Tex kept up a bright fire. It was arranged that he should give a coyote howl when "Gun Bill" and his party arrived.

It was close upon midnight when we heard approaching hoofs, and shortly afterwards the air was rent by a coyote howl. Instantly we dashed from our hiding place, six-shooters in hand.

"Hands up!" I shouted, as I advanced towards the fire. The men swung round in astonishment, and I was surprised to see half-a-dozen of them there besides Tex. One made a movement to pull out his revolver, but my gun spoke and he doubled up like a jack-rabbit.

As I fired, a tall, thin, evil-looking man, whom I learned afterwards was "Gun Bill" himself, fired at me. The bullet went through my gauntlet, grazing my wrist. The next moment, however, he lay dead, having been shot through the heart by another of the Rangers.

"That's two accounted for. Any more?" I said, turning to the other four, all of whom had their hands up. They made no answer.

"Remove their guns, Tex," I shouted.

This done, we tied them on their own horses and took them into Globe.

One of the rules of the Rangers was that we were not to pursue men over the border. It was a regulation that was often winked at, for if we were hot on the trail of a badly-wanted man we did not let him get away just because he managed to cross an imaginary line.

One day a Mexican brought me a note. It was written in good English and purported to come from a Ranger named Harper. It said briefly that he had been captured by bandits—and would I come and rescue him? I was a little suspicious, but as Harper had been missing for some time and the handwriting was similar to his, I concluded that it must be genuine. The Mexican, in reply to questions, told me that the camp of the bandits was outside Juarez, a little way over the border.

Late that night I started off alone. Some of the others wanted to come with me, but I told them that what I intended to do was to locate the camp and confirm the story. If I found I could not get Harper away single-handed I would come back for help.

Three hours later I was in sight of the camp. I staked my horse in a thicket and made my way slowly towards the camp-fire, wriggling along on my stomach. As I got nearer I detected seven men sitting around the blaze, and began to wish I had brought some of the boys with me. But the Mexican bandit is a coward at heart, and the thing to do was to show them that I did not fear them.

Taking a revolver in each hand, I crawled as near as I dared and then, rising to my feet, I rushed forward.

"Hands up!" I shouted, covering the bunch. "The first man who moves goes down for good."

Although they were seven to one they were thoroughly scared and every man's hands went up.

"Now, then," I said, "I want a little talk with you. There's a Texas Ranger here named Harper. I want him, and I want him quick!"

Then something crashed down on the top of my head and I remembered no more. When I came to I was lying bound hand and foot, with a terrible pain at the back of my skull. My captors were in high glee. I listened intently to their scraps of conversation, hoping to hear something about Harper, but they never once referred to him. It occurred to me that they had made him write the letter under threats of torture and then killed him.

When daylight arrived the bandits began to make preparations for moving on. Some tied up the blankets while others fetched the horses and saddled them. One of the men came to where I was lying and gave me a brutal kick; but I gritted my teeth and pretended that I was unconscious, so he took no further notice of me.

When the horses were ready I was thrown across one like a sack of flour and bound to the saddle with strips of raw hide that cut into my flesh. The order was then given to march, and as the band galloped off my spirits sank to zero. The bandits were making for the mountains, and I knew that even if my comrades followed my trail at once they would never find me, for the mountains were honeycombed with hiding-places. There was no hope of rescue for me from the American side of the border.

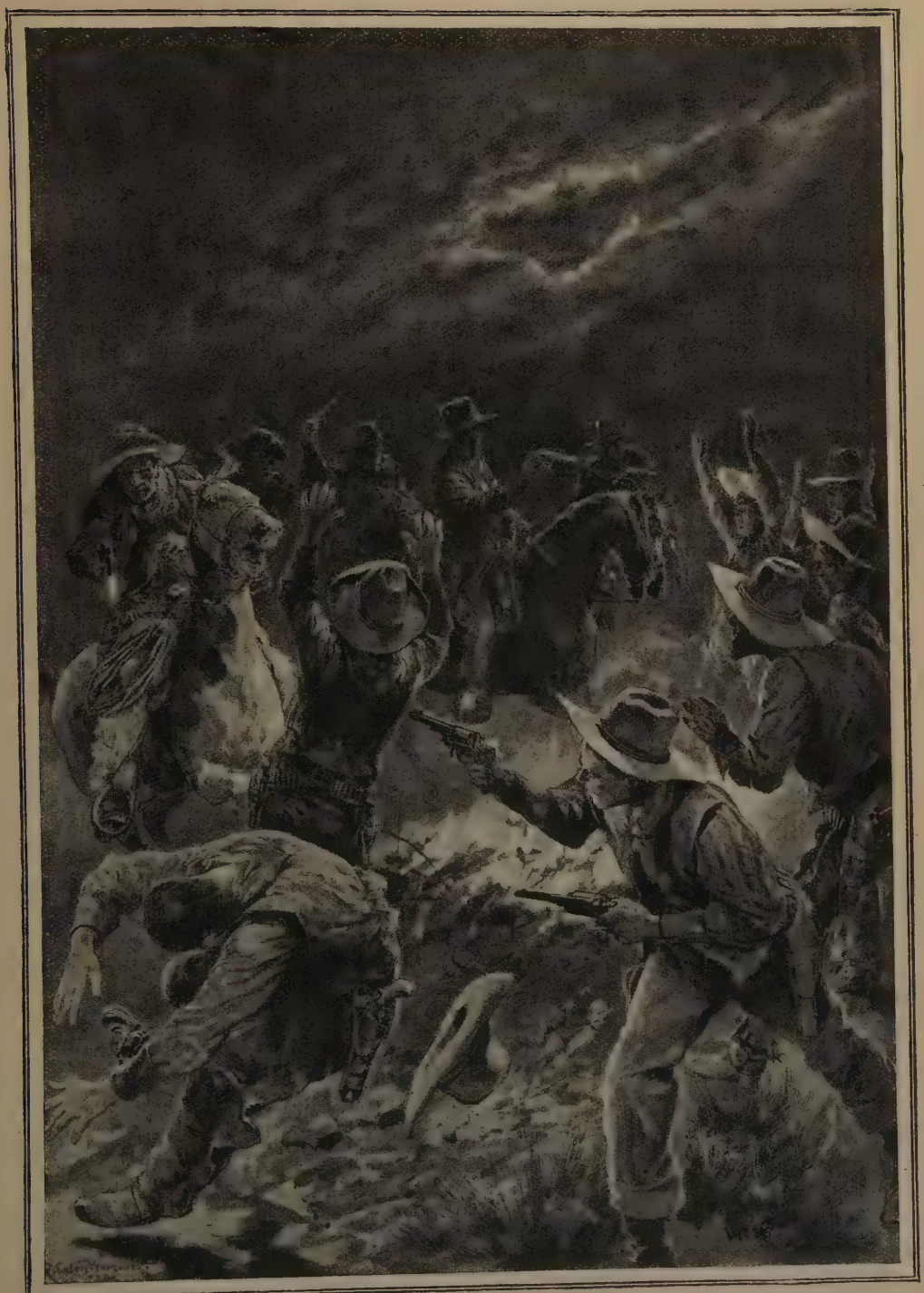
After travelling for about a couple of hours my captors halted and began to prepare breakfast. I was pretty well famished, but I knew that if I asked for food I should only get insults.

Greatly to my astonishment, however, one of the bandits came to me with a gourd of water and some cooked beans.

As soon as I had eaten and quenched my thirst I began to ask myself why they had given me food and drink.

I knew the Mexican bandit through and through, and experience had taught me that he was just about as likely to do a good turn to an American prisoner as a tiger would be to give up his kill to a leopard. The man who had brought me the food had not shown any kindliness, and I finally came to the conclusion that I was being kept alive for some specific purpose.

Late the following day we came to a village where I was thrown into a dirty jail.



"One made a movement to pull out his revolver, but my gun spoke and he doubled up like a jack-rabbit."

All attempts to elicit from my guardians what they intended to do with me were fruitless. I could only conclude they were keeping me with a view to raking up some incident in one of our border fights, which would entitle my captors to a reward and earn for me the bullets of a firing party.

Days passed, however, and nothing happened. I was getting weak from the miserable food and the close confinement, but I could discover no way of escaping; I was too closely guarded.

After I had been in prison about ten days I heard the reports of rifles. Gradually they grew louder and louder, and it was soon evident that the place was being attacked.

After a short time the firing died away, and in the corridor outside the cells I heard loud voices and shouts of command. Listening intently, I was astonished to learn that the place had been taken by Francisco Villa's men, and that he was setting the prisoners at liberty.

This brought me little consolation, however, for I knew that Villa hated the Americans and would not think twice about ordering me to be shot.

As I heard door after door being opened and stern orders given, my brain worked like lightning, trying to evolve some plausible story.

Just as the door of my cell flew open I decided to put on a bold front.

"Come out, you *Gringo!*" shouted an unkempt-looking soldier.

"I am not a *Gringo*," I replied. "I am an Englishman." Which happened to be true, for I was born in Canada of British parents.

"Then what are you doing here?" he asked.

Knowing that I was fighting for my life, I threw discretion to the winds. I told him that I had crossed the border because I had killed an American. I had hardly entered Mexican territory, I continued, before I had been captured by bandits who had probably witnessed the affair, and they were keeping me in prison until they found out what reward was being offered for my recapture.

Some of the men believed my story and others did not. Eventually it was decided that I should be brought before Villa himself.

And so to Villa I was taken—General Villa, as he was at that time, holding that rank in the insurgent army fighting against Carranza, who had proclaimed himself President of Mexico.

I shall never forget my first encounter with Villa. There was nothing remarkable about his face or figure. He looked just what he was—a *peon*, or peasant. But he had a remarkable personality, which was indicated by his piercing eyes.

I told him the same story that I had told his men, and as my late captors had all run away, there was nobody to deny the truth of it.

"You killed a *Gringo*, did you?" he grunted. "And you're a cow-puncher?" he added, looking at my clothes.

"Yes," I replied, and told him again that I was born in Canada and had drifted down south, serving on various ranches.

Whether Villa believed my story or not I do not know, but, looking me square in the face, he suddenly blurted out:—

"You can ride with me, young man, and kill as many *Gringoes* as you like. But mind, if you play false it means a bullet!"

Then and there I decided to follow him as a soldier of fortune. He made me take an oath to the effect that I agreed, under pain of death, to obey his orders implicitly and without question. Everything we commandeered was to be given up, the reward I should receive for my services depending upon Villa himself.

I certainly intended to serve him faithfully, but to escape across the frontier at the first opportunity which, I imagined, I could easily do. As we kept moving farther inland, however, the chance of escape grew steadily less.

Villa was supposed to be fighting for patriotic motives, but I quickly discovered that his "army" was little more than a gang of bandits. If any of Carranza's men came along we gave them battle, but if revolutionary fighting hung fire, we used to raid districts that were supposed to be favourable to Carranza, and in many cases we were little better than robbers, preying on the rest of the community.

What troubled me was this: The raids, I knew, would be reported across the frontier, and in time it would transpire that there was an Englishman or American serving with Villa. Then my name would come out and the authorities, not knowing how I came to be with Villa, would conclude that I had joined his army of my own free will.

When I thought of this I became very disheartened. I ceased to care what happened and took chances which otherwise I should not have done. Naturally my recklessness pleased Villa, and after a time he promoted me to be an officer in his army.

Villa was a born soldier, and as a strategist in guerrilla warfare probably had no equal. He was one of the most fearless men I have ever met, and seemed to bear a charmed life. He was always in front of his troops, leading them in the thickest of the fights, and he never asked a man to do what he would not do himself. Nevertheless, he was a tyrant and a brute, capable of the most bloodthirsty deeds. The least disobedience or sign of cowardice meant not only death but often terrible torture beforehand.

We were always on the march, never long in one place. Sometimes we lived on the fat of the land; at others we had not enough to eat.

For nineteen months I followed him, and it looked as if I should never be able to get away. Then Villa decided to take the town of Chihuahua. It was a daring idea, for the city was not only well fortified, but there were also three thousand Federal soldiers in the garrison, while we had but a few machine-guns and a force only fourteen hundred strong.

When I ventured to suggest that it would prove a stiff job Villa merely replied: "I have decided to take Chihuahua, and I will do so."

Accordingly we made preparations for the attack. We crept up close to the city only to discover that guns had been placed upon the walls. They opened fire upon us, doing considerable damage in our ranks.

We pressed on, however, until we came within range of the machine-guns, when we lost terribly. Our men fought valiantly, considering the odds against them, and despite our heavy casualties we held our ground.

Then Villa gave the order to charge. We were met by a perfect hail of rifle and machine-gun fire and were beaten back with heavy losses, but Villa, galloping in front of his men, ordered them to charge again.

As the charge was being made I jumped down from my horse and took command of a machine-gun, directing my fire on an enemy gun that was playing havoc with us. I had not been firing long when something struck me on the head and I remembered no more.

When I came to I found that I had been wounded in the head, but not seriously. Villa had evidently been badly beaten and driven off, for there were no signs of our men. I washed my wound, tied it up as best I could, and hastened away.

Now for the frontier and liberty, I thought. I determined to aim for Juarez, and then remembered that I had a desert to cross. All I needed was a good horse. I had plenty of money, however, and determined to purchase one.

Making my way to a house, I asked the owner, a Mexican, if he would sell me one of his horses, pulling out a wad of notes to show that I was in a position to pay. By way of reply he told me to clear off, and as he was armed and I was not I knew I had to act with discretion. On the post leading to the corral was a lasso. I casually picked it up and, turning round, saw the Mexican coming in my direction.

He looked ugly, and was in the act of drawing his revolver when the lasso shot out and caught him round the waist. I lost no time in tying him up with his own rope; then I relieved him of his revolver and, taking one of his horses, threw some Mexican dollar bills on the ground as payment and rode off. Two days later I crossed the boundary and was once again under the protection of the Stars and Stripes.

Somehow I did not like the idea of going back to the Texas Rangers and, drifting to Los Angeles, I attracted some attention by capturing nearly all the prizes at a big cowboy sports meeting. This led to my being approached by a well-known Texas ranchman who was interested in a Wild West show known as the "Sheephead Bay Stampede." He asked me if I wanted to go to New York, and when I answered in the negative he declared he would pay me a thousand dollars if I would ride across country to New York dressed as a cowboy. I inquired the reason, and he then explained that it would be a unique way of advertising his show. I was to make the journey on a single horse, travelling as fast as I could.

The novelty of the idea somewhat appealed to me, and after a discussion I accepted the job. I started next day from Houston, Texas, on a piebald pinto pony which had not long been broken in. In a few days my horse and I were the best of friends. My first objective was New Orleans, and I covered the three hundred and sixty miles in ten days. During this period of the journey I made no attempt to earn my living. I camped out where I could, made a fire, saw to my horse, and cooked my own food. After leaving New Orleans, however, I had to think about getting some money. I purchased an extra lasso and had some post-cards printed showing myself in cowboy kit. These I sold at the small towns I passed through, and I also gave exhibitions of my skill with the lasso in the streets, and then passed round the hat. I only aimed to get enough to carry me along, as that was part of the wager.

Twenty-four days later I reached Jacksonville, Florida, a journey of seven hundred and forty-four miles from New Orleans. Shortly afterwards my horse fell sick, and I nursed him as if he were a baby. As soon as he was fit again I started off once more, and quickly made up for lost time. In due course we reached New York, where I was warmly greeted by the ranchman who had suggested the trip. The total distance covered was two thousand one hundred and twenty miles, and the time occupied was exactly sixty-three days thirteen hours and twenty minutes. The ride had been made throughout on the same horse, which was part of the contract, and the feat was regarded as something of a record.

Since this ride I have toured the world giving cowboy exhibitions and doing other odd jobs as a soldier of fortune. One of my most exciting tasks was the running down of a gang of bandits in the island of Santo Domingo, in the West Indies.

It was Major Ramsey, who at that time was in command of the U.S. forces in the island, who suggested that if I was looking for excitement I might assist him in his efforts to capture Evangelista Vicentico.

Vicentico was a notorious outlaw who was giving the authorities a lot of trouble. With his band he was continually raiding peaceful villages and towns, shooting down all who opposed him. Expedition after expedition had been sent against Vicentico, but without success. He had a knack of dispersing his men among the mountains, where it was impossible to track them.

Over and over again I got on the villain's trail, and more than once, when I felt sure I had him, he evaded me. At last, after many weary months of anxious searching, during which time I had several hot battles with outlaws whom I knew were in league with him, my scouts brought me word that he was hiding near Macorise. At that time I was operating with a detachment of Marines and a few scouts, our force being just under thirty strong.

It was not long before we came in sight of Vicentico's camp, on the banks of a small stream. Through my glasses I could detect the bandit leader himself, and my fingers itched for my gun. He was too far away, however, and I not only wanted him but his gang as well.

Evidently Vicentico had a strong force with him, and the problem was how to capture them. What I feared was that the Marines, in their anxiety to strike at the enemy, would betray their presence and spoil everything.

Being on the other side of the stream gave the bandits an advantage. To cross in the face of their fire would be suicidal, while to open the attack from a distance would mean that Vicentico would fight as long as suited his purpose and then retire into the bush at his leisure.

We had two machine-guns with us and these, I decided, must play the big part. With one of my scouts and a couple of the Marines I set off up-stream, and crossed under cover of some bushes about a mile above the enemy's camp, where we took up a position on a low hill nearly opposite our main force on the other bank. Meanwhile another scout had taken a few Marines down-stream and crossed over, and a little while later we detected their signal that they were ready.

At a given signal my machine-gun, trained on the bandit camp, opened fire, and at the same time the Marines on the other side of the camp began firing as fast as they could.

The startled bandits jumped to their weapons, and for one anxious moment I thought they were going to charge the hill. Our rapid fire, however, must have convinced them that there was a small army in hiding there, and they did not like the tap-tap-tap of the machine-gun.

I saw Vicentico give the order to retreat across the stream, and then we began to concentrate our fire, taking more care with the aiming, for now the fight was developing properly. The bandits, all unknowingly, were retreating right into the muzzle of the other machine-gun.

My instructions were that they were to be allowed to get halfway up the hill, when rapid fire was to be opened.

At last the gun began to bark, and I got my Marines ready for the next move. Vicentico, finding himself in a trap, with men falling all round him, ordered his band to take cover while he got the hang of things.

A last burst from my own machine-gun told him that we were waiting for him on one side; then we dashed away to take up a new position.

I guessed that his next move would be up-stream towards the cover of the woods. Under the shoulder of the hill, therefore, panting and sweating, we rushed the gun half a mile farther up.

We opened fire from this new hiding-place the moment the bandits moved, and for a time there was something resembling a panic in their ranks. Meanwhile two of the scouts on our side of the river and two or three Marines on the other bank had stolen down-stream and opened fire with their rifles.

I had carefully arranged that my strongest party should do the least firing so as to mislead Vicentico as to the disposition of our men.

The bandits had by this time decided that they were surrounded and would have to fight whichever way they went; and, of course, they tackled what they thought the weakest point. The fire which they met was appalling in its accuracy and they were swept back.

Sullenly they retired to cover, leaving many dead and wounded on the ground, but I saw through their move. They were going to hold us off till dusk and then get away under cover of night.

This, however, was just what I wanted to avoid, so we moved the machine-gun swiftly back to its original position and fired another burst just to show them we were still there. Then we rushed it back again and fired from up the valley. This seemed to dishearten the rebels, and they crept back to cover. Gradually we closed in, firing as we moved.

Vicentico, I guessed, was in hiding in a dense clump of bushes near the river, and as the bank projected a little here I thought it might be possible to reach him almost under cover. Taking a machine-gun and one scout, I slid into the stream. Keeping close to the bank, we stole downstream to within fifty yards of the clump without being spotted.

Then I set up the gun and, sighting carefully, suddenly let loose a whole belt of cartridges into the bushes.

The effect was instantaneous! Up went the white flag—the great Vicentico had surrendered!

One by one the bandits came in and threw down their guns. When I was satisfied that all who were alive had surrendered I signalled

"The lasso shot out and caught him round the waist."

my very small army to march down from the hill. There were only about fifteen of them all told, and as they appeared Vicentico's face grew purple with rage. When the other detachments came in, numbering three and five respectively, I thought he was going to have apoplexy. I do not think I have ever seen a man so angry in my life! He had still nearly fifty men unwounded, and evidently realized that he had been completely outwitted.

I carry only a scar on my left arm as a memento of my brush with the bandits. Three of my men were killed and two wounded, but Vicentico's casualties were nearly a hundred, the total strength of his force being just under a hundred and fifty men.

In due course we marched our prisoners back to Macorise, where we were joined by several Government officials, who heartily congratulated us on our capture of the formidable Vicentico and his band. I advised them that he was a very slippery customer, and that they must not feel sure about him till he was safely under lock and key. Unfortunately, they barely listened to what I said, and as a result he was never brought to trial. The very next day Vicentico made a desperate attempt to escape and was shot dead by the sergeant of the guard. Seven of his men, however, were condemned to death and the rest got terms of imprisonment varying from ten to twenty years.

The *Sargon* in port.

THE VOYAGE OF THE "SARGON"

by

Thomas Higgins

ILLUSTRATED BY W. G. YORK

The North Sea fisherman's lot is a hard and hazardous one, but luckily not many of the toilers of the deep are called upon to endure such an ordeal as befell the crew of the Grimsby trawler *Sargon* in the early part of 1923. Given up as lost, with those on board mourned as dead, she finally reached home several weeks overdue. The story of her disastrous voyage is here related by her mate.

THE fisherman's calling, I suppose, is a risky one, and we expect our share of bad luck, but personally I never want to experience a worse voyage than befell us in the steam trawler *Sargon*, of which I am mate, at the beginning of the present year.

We sailed from Grimsby on January 5th—the unlucky Friday, be it noted—and at once encountered a strong northerly gale, which had scarcely moderated when we sighted another trawler flying distress signals. Bearing down on her, we found her to be the *Ethel Nutten*, of Granton, N.B. She was leaking badly and asked for assistance, and we stood by her all day. In imagination we began to buy rows of houses and sets of furs for our wives out of the money we hoped to get from the insurance people if we brought her safely into port.

But it was not to be. We had escorted the lame duck to within two miles of May Island, off the Scottish coast, and night had already fallen, when she began to pitch and dive in most alarming fashion. Her crew of ten promptly threw out their boat, but no sooner had it touched the water than we saw it sink. They then sounded their siren for us to come alongside and take them off. This was a ticklish operation in the darkness, with both ships rolling heavily, and one of them waterlogged and helpless, but we eventually managed it, and took off her crew.

The boatswain of the *Sargon*, W. Thomas, and myself then jumped aboard the abandoned vessel, which was now very low in the water. After battening everything down, we got a warp round her stern, and the *Sargon* began to tow her. Thomas and I returned on board our own vessel, and it was

fortunate that we did, for presently, almost without warning, the *Ethel Nutten* gave a plunge and sank like a stone, taking with her a hundred and fifty fathoms of both tow-ropes. One of these, as it swept over the side, struck Deckhand Beavers on the leg, and so severely injured him that we had to leave him in hospital at Granton, where we landed the shipwrecked crew, with the exception of a lad named John Bell, who shipped with us in Beavers' place.

We spent four days in Granton harbour, and then put to sea again—to immediately encounter a terrific north-west gale, which continued with us until we reached Scamva Light (Norway), our decks being constantly swept by the great seas, and snow squalls being frequent. At last, however, we found shelter in the smooth waters of the Norwegian fjords and then, in company with other trawlers, made our way to the fishing grounds off the Murmansk coast. It was bitterly cold and dark for twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four, January being the darkest month of the year in these latitudes.

On Saturday, January 20th, when we shot our trawl, it was freezing so hard that the ropes felt like wood, and would hardly wind round the winch. Fishing proved very bad, and we made up our minds to leave the other trawlers and seek a hunting-ground for ourselves. This we did, but the next thing we knew we were being chased by a Bolshevik gunboat. The chase was quite exciting while it lasted, but by steaming our hardest, with all lights out, and steering a zig-zag course, we eventually dropped our pursuer in the darkness and escaped.

After this fishing improved, and February 2nd saw us at Honningsvaag, where we took in sufficient coal, provisions, and fresh water for a normal trip back across the North Sea to Grimsby. Our misfortune was that this particular voyage was fated to be abnormal—just how abnormal we did not even dream.

We began badly by running aground in a snowstorm, but fortunately on a muddy bottom, so that we were able to get off two hours later on the rising tide without sustaining any damage. Snowstorm succeeded snowstorm, and when at last the weather cleared a little we saw the sun rising—a grim, spectral-looking shape in a sky all patched with green, and knew by all the portents that we were in for a hot time.

Next day it was blowing a hurricane from the S.S.W. and we estimated the strength of the wind at some eighty miles an hour. This was the beginning of our real trouble.

To save our coal, of which we had taken aboard none too much, the engines were eased to half speed, but nevertheless the *Sargon* pitched dangerously, and at times almost stood on end. Every time the seas struck the ship the impact sounded like thunder and, staunch little vessel though she was, she trembled in every plate.

Day after day the gale continued, with no sign of moderation, and each day saw our precious food and coal supply running shorter. To eke out the coal we collected every bit of wood we had on the ship, including some hundreds of fishroom boards, but these burned like tinder, and the steam dropped back from 150lb. to 45lb. pressure. Finally the engines would not move at all, and we lay to on the port tack practically helpless, with our wheel lashed tight.

By shackling a trawl door on to the warp as a sea-anchor we tried to keep the vessel's head to the wind, but owing to the ship's bulk this proved a failure. We next tried a kedge anchor, but had to heave it aboard again broken. By February 10th the fires were out, and we were completely at the mercy of the waves. A cast of the lead gave us eighty fathoms, and the chart showed our approximate position to be fifty miles north-east of the Shetlands, out of the track of all shipping. Things looked black, but still we did not lose hope.

From this date onwards we were on a diet of fish and practically nothing else. Getting heartily tired of it after four or five days, we carefully swept out the flour locker, and with the sweepings, added to half a packet of "Quaker" oats which had become tainted with metal polish, we made a pudding. I can't recommend metal polish as a flavouring for puddings, but at all events it was a change from the eternal fish.

Every day, to keep the labouring ship seaworthy, we had to pump out each of the watertight compartments, all hands using lifelines owing to the heavy seas which continued to sweep us without ceasing. Pumping and chopping wood were now our daily routine.

On Wednesday, the 14th, we made another pudding composed of linseed meal from the medicine chest. We also tried to smoke some of the fish, which by this time was going bad, but owing to the terrific rolling of the vessel and the severe cold the job had to be abandoned.

All this time, in spite of our difficulties, we kept in excellent spirits, a favourite joke being that if the worst came to the worst we could always eat "Ginks," a boy stowaway who had come aboard at Granton.

"Anyway," remarked one philosopher, "if we ever *do* get back home I hope my old woman is married again!"

On the 15th and 16th we felt more hopeful, for both days were beautifully fine, though, owing to our empty bunkers, we could not raise an ounce of steam to take advantage of them. Then the glass and our spirits fell together—and on the 17th it was blowing a hurricane once more.

Things were now getting really serious. The fish on board was becoming uneatable, but we fried some in olive oil—from the medicine chest—and gulped it down. Later,

by a lucky stroke, the cook captured a sea-gull, and followed up this success by catching another on a fish-hook. But the birds weren't very tasty and didn't go very far, and before long lack of food began to take effect upon us.

All this time the possibility of encountering another ship was always in our minds, and we prepared a bonfire on the fo'c'sle head of old net soaked in liver oil, which we saved from the fish.

One night the man on look-out reported a light, and all hands, overjoyed, rushed up and lighted the waiting bonfire; four distress rockets were also fired each minute. The result was a sickening disappointment, for the "light" turned out to be a setting star, and we all returned dismally to the cabin to express our opinions concerning the look-out man. From this moment our spirits really began to flag, for we knew that with every hour that passed we were drifting farther and farther away from shipping. Even the smoking of the fish—we managed to do about two hundredweight—had its disadvantages, for it entailed an extra hour's work a day for all hands, chopping wood for the fires, and we were rapidly getting weaker.

So things dragged on for another five days, and then, on the 22nd, the wind changed for the worse, veering round from S.E. to due south. By means of a rotten old mizzen that we had rigged up for a mainsail, however, and a foresail made by the boatswain, we made a little headway to the west, though our progress was distressingly slow.

The food problem had now become acute. We probed daily amongst the rotting fish, picking out the best of it, which we washed and split and put in some stale brine to salt. We began to envy our cats, which were catching rats galore, the rodents being semi-tame through starvation. One day we took some of them away from the cats, and actually skinned and dressed them ready for boiling and eating. Personally, however, I made up my mind to eat the cats first, a feeling that was shared by most of us. Nevertheless, no one seemed to have the heart to kill the poor brutes.

By this time we were in a bad way, so weak that we could hardly work, or even walk; going up the cabin steps to the deck I had to rest halfway. As day followed day we scanned the horizon ceaselessly for a ship, but never a single one hove in sight, and we began to think we were alone on an empty ocean. Our water was now running low, and it is no exaggeration to say that starvation and thirst were staring us in the face. This had its inevitable effect; our tempers began to fail, and we were for ever quarrelling and bickering among ourselves, each man being under the impression that he was being made to do more work than the others. I am afraid that Ginks, being the unlucky "thirteenth" on board, fared badly at times.

It seemed to us that our cup was nearly full, but on Saturday morning, February 24th, a fresh misfortune befell us, Rudd, the second engineer, falling ill with dysentery. A few hours later the skipper went down with the same trouble. Deck-hand Everitt was the next casualty, and he was followed by others. Considering the terrible stuff we had been eating this was not surprising, the only wonder being that the disease had not put in its appearance before. Bad fish, washed down with weak and milkless coffee, is not the best of diets at any time, and in conjunction with our ceaseless toil and exposure it is remarkable that we got along as well as we did.

Sunday, February 25th, saw the water supply cut down to one kettle-full a day for all purposes. More of the crew were sick, and the others were sulky and morose, refusing to speak to one another—which perhaps was just as well. To keep warm was impossible, except by rolling up in one's blankets and top-coats after doing one's allotted two-hours' watch. After drinking our meagre allowance of coffee, we dried the grounds for making cigarettes with. Our tobacco was long since exhausted, and the desire for a smoke was strong upon us. Had we had tobacco I think we might have found our hardships more supportable. Never in my life have I hunted harder to find a possible cigarette-end! And all the time we were drifting, drifting, across an empty sea—where to we were almost past caring; and we quarrelled fiercely whenever we discussed our position and prospects.

Then, when things began to appear utterly hopeless, once more a light was reported across the dark wastes of water. Remembering the previous false alarm, we were none too sanguine, but nevertheless we tumbled out of the after-cabin—all hands had been allowed to sleep aft in order to keep warm—and up on deck. In my hurry I leaped from my bunk right on to the sleeping form of young Bell, stretched out on the floor below me, but I'm afraid I didn't stay to apologize!

Arriving on deck, we saw at once that this time it was a ship's light indeed. Forgetting our weakness and fatigue, with one accord we rushed to the bonfire, and never have I heard such cursing when, at first, the paraffin oil couldn't be found! In a few seconds, however, the flames were leaping up, and in our frenzy of impatience we fed them with liver oil and even our new nets. Rockets and Véry lights were also sent up, while the boatswain, rushing to the bridge, waved a piece of blazing tarpaulin round his head.

The suspense was awful. Would the vessel see us, and, if so, would it stop? At last, to our unbounded delight, we saw that the ship was lying to, and when daylight broke she came alongside, turning out to be

"In our impatience we fed the flames with liver oil and even our new nets."

the German trawler *Schleswig-Holstein*—by a strange coincidence the very vessel which we had prevented from landing fish at Grimsby during the coal strike of last year. More than that, we had chased her out of the harbour.

The seas were still running high, but after considerable trouble we launched our small boat, and Skipper McCarthy, the boatswain, two engineers, and a deck-hand went aboard the stranger, where breakfast was just being served. Fortunately the Germans appeared to bear no malice for the rough handling they had received at Grimsby, and while the two skippers were in consultation regarding towing, the remainder of our boat's crew

were given a good meal. They remained aboard about an hour and a half, and then returned to the *Sargon* with a stock of provisions, black bread, and tobacco. Never did we fall upon food and 'baccy with greater relish!

Even then the bad fortune that had dogged us for so long contrived to give us a last scurvy kick. No sooner had the men and grub come aboard than a huge sea drove the boat against the trawler's side and smashed it to matchwood, all that was left being the stem at the end of the painter.

Seemingly we were not yet out of the wood! All day long we tried to get a warp between us and the German, and finally, just as darkness was coming on again, the line became entangled in his propeller! How his crew contrived to get it clear again without being washed overboard I do not know, for terrific seas kept crashing aboard her. Working all night, however, they eventually cleared away the tangle, and next morning came alongside again and took us in tow.

The following day saw us passing between the Westmann Islands and the mainland of Iceland, enjoying the first smooth water we had met with for many days, and next afternoon we dropped anchor in Reykjavik outer harbour. Our story soon got about, and we received a great welcome from the crews of the other ships in harbour and the population ashore, although we were placed under nominal "arrest" until the German trawler got security for his towing charges. This did not prevent some of us, escorted by friendly Icelanders, from visiting the famous natural hot baths, where I enjoyed the finest swim I have ever had.

Monday, March 5th, saw us "liberated," and we left for home—once more under our own steam—wondering what the elements had in store for us *this* time. As it happened, however, the passage was excellent, and we arrived at Aberdeen without mishap. There we coaled again, and set out for our home port, Grimsby.

Here we met with an overwhelming reception. The Iceland capital and Aberdeen had done their part in this way, but it was nothing to our welcome at Grimsby. We were three weeks overdue—a long time for a steamer—and had been given up for dead. The sirens of the vessels in dock shrieked continuously, almost drowning the cheers of the people on the quayside, and there were affecting scenes when we met our wives and relatives. The Mayor of Grimsby, Councillor W. Womersley, and Captain Smedley, the port missionary, officially welcomed us on behalf of the town.

The crew of the *Sargon* after their return. The Author is seen at the extreme right of the picture.

Our gallant little *Sargon*, owing to the hammering she had received, went straight into dock for the fitting of a new funnel and fo'c'sle head and a general overhaul, while we, as soon as we could escape, went to our homes to rest and recuperate.

Thus ended quite the most exciting voyage that it has been my lot to undergo.